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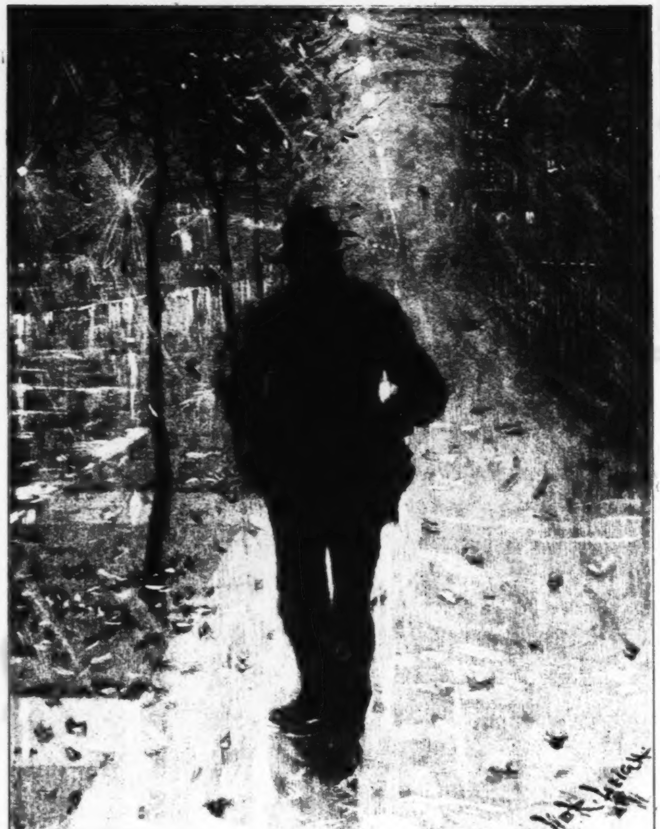
THE WORKERS



THE SENSE OF INFINITY IS HEIGHTENED BY THE FLOATING MIST.

THE WORKERS

AN
EXPERIMENT IN REALITY

BY

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THE WEST

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THE WORKERS

CHAPTER I

THE ARMY OF THE UNEMPLOYED

ROOMS OF THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN
ASSOCIATION, CHICAGO, ILL.
Saturday Evening, December 5, 1891.

A NEW phase of my experiment is begun. Hitherto I have been in the open country, and have found work with surprising readiness. Now I am in the heart of a congested labor market, and I am learning, by experience, what it is to look for work and fail to find it; to renew the search under the spur of hunger and cold, and of the animal instinct of self-preservation until any employment, no matter how low in the scale of work, that would yield food and shelter, appears to you the very Kingdom of Heaven; and if it could suffer violence, it would seem as though the strength of your desire must take that kingdom by force. But it remains impregnable to your attack, and, baffled and weakened, you are thrust back upon yourself and held down remorselessly to the cold, naked fact that you, who in all the universe are of supremest importance to yourself, are yet of no importance to the universe. You are a superfluous human being. For you there is no part in the play of the world's activity. There remains for you simply this alternative: Have you the physical and moral qualities which fit you to survive, and which will place you at last within the working of the large scheme of things, or, lacking these qualities, does there await you inevitable wreck under the onward rush of the world's great moving life?

That, at all events, is pretty much as it appears to-night to Tom Clark and me. Clark is my "partner," and we are not in good luck nor in high spirits. We each had a ten-cent breakfast this morning, but neither has tasted food since, and to-night, after an exhausting search for work, we must sleep in the station-house.

We are doing our best to pass the time in warmth and comfort until midnight. We know better than to go to the station-house earlier than that hour. Clark is in the corner at my side pretending to read a newspaper, but really trying to disguise the fact that he is asleep.

An official who walks periodically through the reading-room, recalling nodding figures to their senses, has twice caught Clark asleep, and has threatened to put him out.

I shall be on the alert, and shall warn Clark of his next approach, for after this place is closed we shall have long enough to wait in the naked street before we can be sure of places in the larger corridor of the station, where the crowding is less close and the air a degree less foul than in the inner passage, where men are tightly packed over every square foot of the paved floor.

We are tired and very hungry, and not a little discouraged; we should be almost desperate but for one redeeming fact. The silver lining of our cloud has appeared to-night in the form of falling snow. From the murky clouds which all day have hung threateningly over the city, a quiet, steady snow-fall has begun, and we shall be singularly unfortunate in the morning if we can find no pavements to clean.

In the growing threat of snow we have encouraged each other with the brightening prospect of a little work, and for quite half an hour after nightfall we stood alternately before the windows of two cheap restaurants in Madison Street, studying the square placards in the windows on which the bills of fare are printed, and telling each other, with nice discriminations between bulk and strengthening power of food, what we shall choose to-morrow.

It is a little strange, when I think of it, the closeness of the intimacy between Clark and me. We never saw each other until last Wednesday evening, and we know little of each other's past. But I feel as though the ties that bound me to him had their roots far back in our histories. Perhaps men come to know one another quickest and best on a plane of life, where in the fellowship of destitution they struggle for the primal needs and feel the keen sympathies which attest the basal kinship of our common humanity. Ours are not intellectual affinities—at least they are not consciously these—but we feel shrewdly the community of hunger and cold and isolation, and we have drawn strangely near to each other in this baffling struggle for a social footing, and have tempered in our comradeship the biting cold of the loneliness that haunts us on the outskirts of a crowded working world.

. . . .

Early on last Wednesday morning, in the gray light of a cloudy day, I began the last stage of the march to Chicago. A walk of something less than thirty miles would take me to the heart of the city.

There is an unfailing inspiration in these early renewals of the journey. Solid food and a night of unfathomable sleep have restored the waste of tissue. I set out in the morning with a sense of boundless freedom, with an opening day and the whole wide world before me, with my heart leaping in the joy of living and in high expectancy of what the day may hold of experience and of insight into the lives of my fellow-men.

On this particular morning there is added fulness and freshness in that inbreathing which gives the zest of life. Long had Chicago loomed large to my imagination, and now it stood before me, its volumes of black smoke mingling with the leaden sky in the northern horizon.

How much it had come to mean to me, this huge metropolis of the shifting centre of our population! The unemployed were there, and I had not seen them yet; hundreds lived there who are fiercely at war with the existing state of things, and their speech was an unknown tongue to me, and my conventional imagination could not compass the meaning of their imagings; and then the poor were there, the really destitute, who always feel first and last of all the pressure upon the limits of subsistence, and who in the grim clutch of starvation underbid one another for the work of the sweaters, until the brain reels at the knowledge of the incredible toil by which body and soul are kept together. All this awaited me, the very core of the social problem whose conditions I had set out to learn in the terms of concrete experience.

Nor was I insensible to the charm of other novelties. I have been pressing westward through a land unknown to me. Gradually I am beginning to see the essential provinciality of a mind which knows the Eastern seaboard, and has some measure of acquaintance with countries and cities and with men from Ireland to Italy, but which is densely ignorant of our own vast domain, and shrinks from all that lies beyond Philadelphia as belonging to "the West," which sums up the totality of a frontier, where man and nature share a sympathetic wildness, and sometimes vie in outbursts of lawless force. I have not yet reached "the West" in any essential departure from the social and industrial structure of the East. And from the new point of view, "the West" recedes ever farther from my sight, until impatient desire sometimes spurs me to a quicker journey, in the fear that the real West may have faded from our map before I reach it, and I may miss the delight of vital contact with the untamed frontier.

Moreover, I could but feel a student's kindling interest in the larger vision of this great centre of industrial life.—Its renaissance with augmented vigor from the ashes of its earlier history.—The swelling tide of its swarming people until the fifteen hundred thousand mark is reached and passed, and the mounting waves of population roll in, each with the strength of an army of fighting men.—The vastness of its productive enterprises, where all the shrewd economies of modern commerce reveal themselves, and where skill and organizing power and the genius of initiative win their quick recognition and rewards, and men of parts pass swiftly from the lowest to the highest places in the scale of productive usefulness and power.—And then the splendid vigor of its nobler living, its churches and public schools and libraries and wise philanthropies, and its impatient hunger after art, which impels it to lay eager, unrelenting hands upon the products of a score of centuries, and, in a single day, to call them "mine."

But I was fast nearing the goal of my desire, and the claims of pressing needs were crowding out the visions of the morning. I had passed through the wilderness by which the Pittsburg & Fort Wayne Railroad enters the outskirts of Chicago. As far as the eye could reach had stretched a dreary plain broken by the ridges of sand-dunes, among which stood dwarfed oaks, and gnarled and stunted pines, and the slender, graceful stems of white-barked birches, on whose twigs the last brown leaves of autumn rustled in the winter wind. Upon my right I saw at last the broad bosom of the lake, gleaming like burnished steel under the threatening sky, and breaking into a line of inky blackness where it lapped the pebbles on the beach.

Presently I learn that I am in South Chicago, and I note the converging lines of railways that cross the streets on the level at every possible angle, and the surface cable-cars, and the long line of blast-furnaces by the lake, and elevators here and there, and huge factories, and the myriad homes of workingmen. It is all a blackened chaos to my eyes, rude and crude and raw, and I wonder that orderly commerce can flow through channels so confused.

But the streets are soon more regular, and for some time I have been checking off, by their decreasing numerals, the approach to my journey's end. I am in the midst of a seemingly endless suburban region. There are wide stretches of open prairie, cut through by city streets; there are city buildings of brick and stone standing alone, or in groups of twos and threes, stark and appealing in their lonely waiting for flanking neighbors; and there are comfortable wooden cottages set with an air of rural seclusion among trees, and having lawns and garden areas about them; and then there are whole squares built up like the *nuclei* of new communities with conventional three-storied dwellings, and the varied shops of local retail trade, and abundant saloons.

Early in the afternoon I stop to rest on the platform of the Woodlawn station of the Illinois Central Railway. For some time I have had glimpses within a highly boarded enclosure of towering iron frames, with their graceful, sweeping arches meeting at dizzy heights, and appearing like the fragmentary skeletons of mammoths mounted in an open paleontological museum.

The suburban trains are rushing in and out of the station with nearly the frequency of elevated trains in New York, and not far away are lines of cable-cars, where a five-cent fare would take me, in a few minutes, over the weary miles which intervene to the business portion of the town. But I have not one cent, and much less five, and if I had so much as that it would go for food, for I am tired, it is true, but I am much hungrier than tired.

There is a hopeful prospect in the air of immense activity in this neighborhood. I have easily recognized the vast enclosure beyond as Jackson Park, and the steel skeletons as the frames of the exposition buildings. Thousands of men are at work there, and the growing volume of the enterprise may furnish a ready chance of employment. I am but a few steps from the Sixty-third Street entrance, and, in my ignorance, I am soon pressing through, when a gatekeeper challenges me, civilly:

"Let me see your ticket."

"I have no ticket," I reply.

He is roused in an instant, and he steps threateningly toward me, his voice deepening in anger.

"Get out of this, then, you d—— hobo, or I'll put you out!"

At the gate I stand my ground in the right of a citizen and explain that I am looking for work, and am hopeful of a job from one of the bosses.

"This ain't no time to see a boss," is his retort; "they're all busy. If we let you fellows in here we'd be lousy with hoboes in an hour. Come at seven in the morning, if you like, and take your chances with the others. Only my private tip to you is that you ain't got no chance, not yet."

Not far away there are many new buildings going up, huge, unlovely shells of brick that even at this stage tell plainly their struggles with the purely utilitarian problem of a maximum of room accommodation at a minimum of cost. I walk toward the nearest one, pondering, the while, the meaning of the word *hobo*, new to me, and having an uncomfortable feeling that, for the first time, I have been taken, not for an unemployed laborer in honest search of work, but for one of the professionally idle.

It has begun to rain, a dreary, sopping drizzle, half mist, half melting snow, heavy with the soot of the upper air, and it clings tenaciously, until my threadbare outer coat is twice its normal weight, and my leaking boots pump the slimy pavement water at every step.

For two hours or more I go from one contractor to another, among the new buildings, asking work. The interviews are short and decisive. The typical boss is he who is moving anxious-eyed among his men with attention fixed upon some detail. He hears without heeding my request, and he shouts an order before he turns to me with an imperative "No, I don't want you!" and sometimes an added curse.

"I guess you are the fiftieth man that has asked me for a job to-day," said one boss, more communicative than the others. "I'm sorry for you poor devils," he added, with a searching look into my face, "but there's too many of you."

My walk has carried me now through the coming Midway Plaisance and past the grounds of the new Chicago University to the outskirts of a park. I enter there with a feeling of relief, for I am soon out of the atmosphere of infinite employment where there is no work for me. Here there are open lawns, with snow crystals clinging to the tender turf, and trees of bewildering variety whose boughs are outstretched in graceful benediction over winding walks and drives and the curving, mossy banks of lakes.

When I emerge from this touch of nature and high art it is upon a stately boulevard of double drives and quadruple rows of sturdy elms which line the bridle-paths and wide pavements. Mile after mile I walk, tired and hungry and wet, and quite lost in wonder. Is there in the wide world a city street to match with this? Rising in a paradise of landscape gardening it stretches its majestic length like the broad sweep of another *Champs Elysees*, flanked by palaces of uncounted cost and unimagined horror of architecture, opening here to a stretch of wide prairie, and closing there to the front of a " block " of houses of uncompromising Philistinism and decorations of "unchastened splendor," and reaching, at times, its native dignity in a setting of buildings which tell the final truth of the elegance of simplicity.

It has grown dark when I enter Michigan

Avenue, and again my way stretches far before me, this time under converging lines of lights that seem to meet at an almost infinite distance. The sense of infinity is heightened by the floating mist, in which the nearer lights play with an effect of orange halo about them, and the farther lamps shine in an ever vaguer distance behind their clinging veils of fog.

Scarcely a soul is in the street. It is a residence quarter of much wealth, and like all else that I have seen so far, of strangest incongruities. Houses of lavish cost and shabbiest economy of taste, so gorgeous that you can scarcely believe them private homes, give way, at times, to lines of brown fronts precisely like those which in unvarying uniformity of basement and "stoop" and four-storied façade, flank miles of dreary side-streets in New York. These yield in turn to churches and apartment-houses and hotels and clubs—all creating an atmosphere of wealth and of social refinement, while almost interspersed with them are homes of apparent poverty and certainly of gentility on the ravelled edge of things. And bursting now through all this medley is the clanging, rumbling rush of railway traffic. I can scarcely believe my eyes at first, but under the frowning walls of a towering armory I am held up by the downward sweep of the gates of a railway crossing, on the dead level of the avenue, and am kept there until a freight-train has crawled past its creaking length.

It all seems a meaningless chaos at the first, but soon I feel the pulse of the life within it, a young life of glorious vigor and of indomitable resolve to attain what it so strongly feels though vaguely knows. And here and there I can see the promise of its fair fruition in lines of strength and power and beauty, where the hand of some true master has wrought a home for the abiding of good taste.

Soon there is an abrupt end of buildings on my right, and the land fades away into an open plain, and from out the sleet-swept darkness beyond comes faintly the sound of "crisping ripples on the beach." I know that I am at my journey's end, for I have begun to catch glimpses of Ossa-piled-on-Pelion structures which rise in graceless lines into the black night. I come up all standing before one of these, a veritable Palazzo Vecchio, huge, impenetrable, vast, bringing into this New-World city something of the sense of time and density of the Piazza della Signoria.

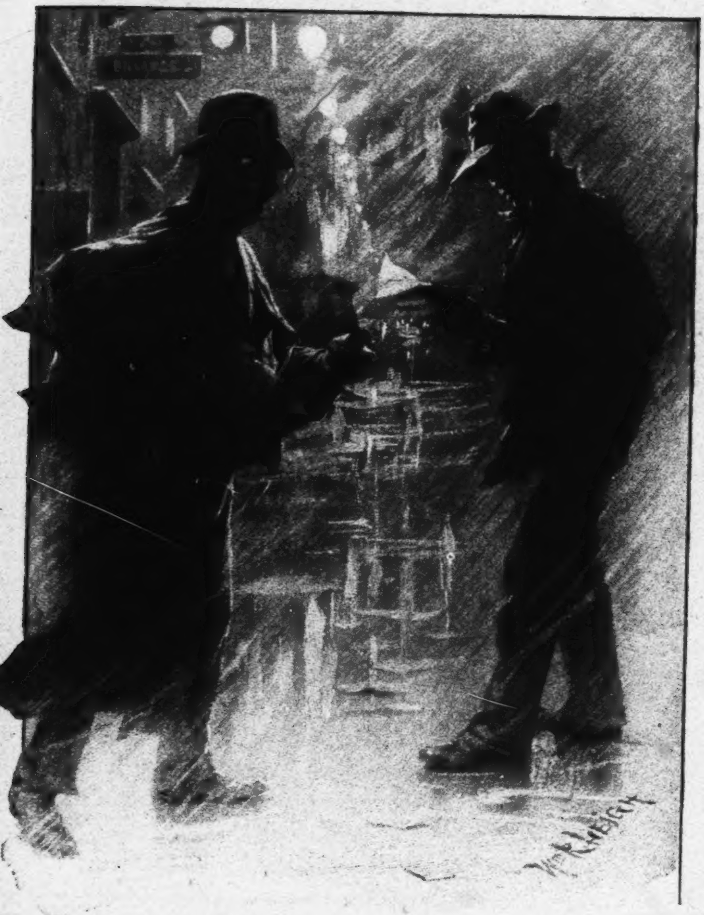
Here, too, the avenue is almost deserted, and I turn sharply under the massive battlements of this Florentine palace, to where the glare of many lights and the counter-currents of street-crowds attract me. Across Wabash Avenue I pass on to State Street. My eye has just begun to note the novelties of the scene when it falls upon the figure of a young man. He stands in the middle of the pavement at the corner, and swiftly hands printed slips of white paper among the moving crowd. Many persons pass unheeding, but a few accept the proffered notice. I take one, and I stop for a moment on the curb to read it. Its purport as an invitation to attend a Gospel meeting has become clear to me, when I find the young man at my side. He wears a heavy winter ulster that reaches to his boot-tops, and its rolling collar is turned up snugly about his ears. On his hands are dog-skin gloves, and the rays of street-lights glisten in the myriad drops of half-frozen mist that cling like heavy dew to the rough, woollen surface of his coat. I must cut a figure standing there, wet and travel-stained, my teeth chattering audibly in the cold night-air, and it is plainly my evident fitness as a field for Christian work that has drawn to me the notice of this young evangelist.

"That meeting is not far," he is saying, "and it's warm there. Won't you go?"

"Thank you, I will," is my ready reply, and then he politely points the way down a side street on the left where, he says, a large transparency over the door marks the entrance to the meeting-hall.

The place is crowded with men—workingmen many of them—and many are plainly of that blear-eyed, bedraggled, cowering type which one soon learns to distinguish from the workers. Men pass freely in and out with no disturbance to the meeting, and watching my chance I soon slip into a vacant seat near the great stove that burns red-hot half way up the room. Ah, the luxury of the warmth and the undisputed right to sit in restful comfort! Again and again, in the afternoon I had sat down on the steps of some public building, but from every passing eye had come a shot of questioning suspicion, and once a patrolling officer ordered me to move on with a sharp reminder that "the step of a church was no loafing-place."

Deeper and deeper I sink into my seat. A warm, seductive ease enfolds me. I dare not fall asleep for fear of being turned into the street. And yet the very hint of going out again into the shelterless night comes over me in the dim sense of fading consciousness as a thought so grotesquely impossible that I nearly laugh aloud. Out from this warmth and light and cover into the pitiless inhospitality of the open town? Oh, no, that is beyond conceiving! And all the while



"THAT MEETING IS NOT FAR," HE IS SAYING, "AND IT'S WARM THERE. WON'T YOU GO?"

I know—such is the subtlety of our instinctive thinking—that it is the awful fear of this that conquers now the overmastering sleep which woos me.

The men are singing lustily under inspiring leadership and to the accompaniment of a cornet and harmonium. Short prayers are offered, and fervent exhortations, interspersed with hymns, are made, and finally the men are urged to "testify."

I follow in vague anxiety the change of exercise, but no clear idea reaches me; for in full possession of my mind is the haunting fear of a benediction which will send us out again. But while the men are speaking in quick succession there begins to pierce to the benumbed seat of thought a sense of something very living. Their speech, in simplest, homeliest phrase, is of things most intimate and real. They speak of life—their own—sunk to deepest degradation. They tell the story of growing drunkenness and vice, of hope fast fading out of life, of faith and honor and self-respect all gone, and at last the outer dark wherein men live to feed their passions and blaspheme until they dare to die, or death anticipates the courage of despair. And then the purport of it all shines clear in what they have to tell of a Divine hand reached out to them, of trembling hope and love reborn, of desire after righteousness breathing anew in a prayer for help.

Now I am all vividly alive and keen, for, standing straight not far from where I sit, is a grand figure of a man. He is bronzed, deep-chested, lithe, and in the setting of his shoulders there is splendid strength, which shows again in the broad, clean-cut hands that quiver in their grip upon the seat in front. He has the modest bearing of a gentleman, and his unfaltering voice vibrates with a compelling sense of deep sincerity.

"I haven't any story different from what you've heard to-night, but I, too, want to tell what God has done for me. When I got my growth I went West, and turned cow-puncher. I was young, and I liked the life and the men, and I went over pretty much all the western country, and there ain't any kind of devilment that cowboys get into that I didn't have a hand in. I never thought of God nor of my soul. I never cared. I despised religion. I thought that I was strong and master of myself. I drank and swore and gambled, and did worse, and it never troubled me a bit. But a time came when I found that I wasn't master. There was something in me stronger than me, and that was the love of drink. And, friends, that was the beginning of the end. I began to lose my self-respect, and the end of it was that there ain't a poor devil in this town that is sunk any lower than what I was. You know what that means. One night, a year and a half ago, I was walking through Harrison Street. I was half-drunk on barrel-house whiskey, and all I was thinking of was how I could get up pluck enough to kill myself. But I stopped in a crowd around some Salvation Army people. A man older than me was telling how he was helped by the power of God out of a life like mine and made a man of again. I liked the way he had, for he seemed straight. I waited for him, and he told me, all to myself, the story of Christ's power to save lost men, and how He lived and died to save us. It seemed too good to be true. I'd known it in a way, but I never knew it was meant for me. And right away when I began to see that there was hope for me yet, that I could get back my self-respect, and be master of myself, not in my own strength, which had failed me, but in His strength, why, friends, my heart went right out to the Saviour in a prayer for help. And what I want to say most of all is this, that in all the hard fight that I've had since, in all the ups and downs of it, He hasn't failed me once. He's made my life new to me, and I love Him from my heart, and I know that in His strength I will gain the victory at last. Friends, what the Bible tells us about His 'saving us from our sins' is true."

He sits down, and a hymn is given out and sung, but the truth which has found lodgement in our hearts is the living truth of a human life reclaimed. We have listened to the story of the prodigal from his own lips. We have heard again the cosmic parable of wandering and return; the mystery of creation, and fall, and re-creation by a power divine ; the great, irrefutable witness to the Truth in the history of a lost soul come to itself and returning to the Father's house.

In the midst of the singing the leader walks quietly down the aisle to the rear. Two ladies are there struggling in a vain effort to quiet an old man. They have come to help in the conduct of the service, and the old man has increasingly claimed their care, for he is drunk and is growing violent. I have noticed him in his restless movements. Upon his stooping figure he wears an old army coat and cape that are dripping with the rain. His gray mustache and beard are long and matted, and stained all round his mouth with the deep brown of tobacco-juice. His unkempt hair falls in frowsy masses about his ears, and his lustreless eyes, inflamed and expressionless, bulge from their swollen sockets.

In an instant the leader's strong hand is upon him, and with no commotion above the sound of song the old man is soon without the hall, and the leader back in his place again singing as heartily as ever.

When the meeting ends the crowd moves slowly and listlessly toward the door, as though its prevailing mood were aimless beyond the dull necessity of passing the time. The fine rain and melting snow are still falling through the mist. The men drift away singly or in groups of twos and threes, under the flickering lights, their heads bent slightly forward and their bare hands thrust into the side-pockets of their trousers.

In the crush about the foot of the aisle a young man speaks to me:

"You are pretty wet, aren't you?" he says, quietly, as the jam presses him against me.

I see at a glance that he is far more respectable than I, and my first mental attitude is one of hospitality to further evangelizing effort. But I shift at once, for without waiting for a reply from me, he adds:

"It's d—— tough to go out into that," as he turns up the collar of his light covert coat in the blast of piercing dampness which strikes our faces through the open door.

"It is tough," I agree, as I study his face. He is about thirty, I should say, and almost six feet high, but of rather slender figure. He is smooth-shaven, and an effect of pallor is heightened by yellow hair and pale blue eyes, with dark arcs beneath them and a bluish tinge about his mouth. Plainly he has been little exposed to the outer air, but he is an habitual workman, as his hands attest unmistakably when he lifts them to adjust his coat-collar.

"Ain't you got no place to go to?" he asks.

"No."

"No more have I," he adds, laconically. And then, after a pause:

"When did you strike this town?"

"This evening."

"Looking for a job?"

"Yes."

"Same as me. What kind of a job?"

"Any kind that I can get."

"Ain't you got a trade?"

"No."

"Well, I don't believe you are any worse off for that here. I struck the place yesterday and I ain't never seen so many idle men and hoboes in my life before. When the iron-works in

Cleveland closed down, that laid me off. I couldn't get no job there, and so I beat my way here. I had fifty cents in my clothes and that got me something to eat yesterday and a bed last night, but I spent my last cent for grub this noon. I've been to most every foundry in Chicago, I guess, but I ain't found any sign of a job yet. Where are you going to put in the night?"

"I don't know, for I haven't any money either."

"I am going to the Harrison Street station and I'll show you the way, partner, if you like. My name is Clark, Thomas L. Clark," he adds, with a particularity which is another proof of his belonging to a higher order of workingmen than I.

I tell him my name, but he evidently considers it not a serviceable one, for he ignores it from the first, and consistently makes use of "partner."

We walk together in the direction of State Street, and Clark explains to me that we must not go to the station until after midnight, a fact which he had learned, and the reasons for it, from an acquaintance in a cheap lodging-house where he had spent the night before.

At the corner I hold Clark for a moment until my eyes have caught the character of the street.

It is wide, with broad pavements on each side, and is lined with great business houses of retail trade, the "department store" the prevailing type. The shop-windows are ablaze with electric lights, and gorgeous as to displays which are taking on a holiday character. Whole fronts of some of the buildings are fairly covered with temporary signs, painted in gigantic letters on canvas stretched on wooden frames, and vying fiercely in strident announcements of "sweeping reductions" and "moving," and "bankrupt," and "fire sales."

There is little noise upon the street aside from the almost constant swishing rush of cable-cars and the irritating clangor of their gongs. The crowds had wholly disappeared. There are a few pedestrians, who hold their umbrellas close above their heads, and step briskly in evident haste to get in out of the stormy night, and we pass men of our own type who are drifting aimlessly, and now and then a stalwart officer, well-booted and snug under his waterproof, with his arms folded and his club held tight in the pressure of an armpit.

We are walking south along the west side of State Street. There is a swift social decline here, for every door we pass is that of a saloon, and above us hang frequent transparencies which

IN THE CORNER NEAR US ARE THREE MEN, SLOUCHING, LISTLESS, WEARY SPECIMENS OF THEIR KIND, WHO ARE PLAYING "COMRADES."

advertise lodgings at ten and fifteen cents, while across the way are the flaring lights of a cheap theatre.

"We can get warm in here," says Clark, abruptly, and he turns into a doorway which opens on the street.

I follow him down a narrow passage whose faint light enters through a stained-glass partition, which hems it in along the inner side wall of the building. Through a door at the end of the passage we enter a large room brilliantly lighted, and I follow Clark to an iron stove at one side in which a coal fire burns furiously. In the corner near us are three men, slouching, listless, weary specimens of their kind, who are playing "Comrades" with a gusto curiously out of keeping with their looks of bored fatigue. One has a harp, another a violin, and the third drums ceaselessly upon a piano of harsh, metallic tone.

There are a dozen round tables in the room, and at these are seated small groups of men and women drinking beer. Some of the men are workmen, but most are loafers, not of the tramp but of the rough civic type.

The women are young, most of them very young, and there is little trace of beauty and almost none of hard brutality in any face among them. They are simply commonplace. As a company the women lack the hale robustness of the men. They are mostly little women, of slight figures, and some add to this a transparency of skin and a feverish brightness of eye which clearly mark the sure burning of consumption. A few are cast in sturdier mould, and, with faces flushed with drink, they look strong and healthy. All seem warmly dressed in cheap, worn garments suited to the season, and there are many touches of finery and some even of taste in their shabby winter hats. Each carries a leather purse in her hand, or allows it to lie on the table before her with her gloves. The hands of nearly all of them are bare, and you see at once that they are large and coarse and very dirty.

Suddenly you note that the social atmosphere is one of strangest, completest camaraderie. The conversation is the blasphemous, obscenest gossip of degraded men that keeps the deal level of the ordinary unrelieved by anger or by mirth, and varying only with the indifferent interchange of men's and women's voices.

The naturalness and untrammelled social ease have blinded you for a time to what you really see, and then the black reality reveals itself in human degradation below which there is no depth—as though lost, sexless souls were already met upon a common plane of deepest knowledge of all evil. And yet in very truth they are living fellow men and women, in whom have centred the strength of natural love and hope, and centres still the constraining love of a Heavenly Father.

Clark is whispering in my ear:

"I guess we'd better get out of this. That waiter has his eye on us. In a minute he'll ask us for our orders."

We pass again through the garish lights that flood the pavements before saloons from whose inner chambers come the tinkling, brassy notes of cheap music.

"Are they all like that place we've been in?" I ask.

"These dives, you mean?"

"Yes."

"They are all the same. There are hundreds like them in this town," he answers.

Near the centre of what appears to be the chief business section of the street Clark turns into a dark entry.

"Come up here," he says to me over his shoulder.

"What is this?" I call after him from the threshold.

"Here's where I slept last night," he replies.

I follow up a flight of filthy wooden steps. Under the light of a single gas-jet which burns faintly over the first landing, we turn to a door at the right. Within is a sustained volume of men's voices at conversation pitch, and we enter at once upon a company of thirty or forty men seated on wooden benches around a base-burner, or standing in groups within the compass of its grateful warmth. The unmoving air is thick with tobacco-smoke, and dense with pollution beyond all but the suggesting power of words. An electric arc gleams from the centre-ceiling, and sputters and hisses above the noise of mingled speech. In the ghastly light the floor and walls are covered with black shadows, sharply articulated, and revealing clearly through their restless movements the ragged, unkempt condition of the men.

In one corner is an office quite like a ticket-booth at an athletic field, and behind the narrow window stands a man with an open book before him. His eyes wander ceaselessly over the company, and presently he steps out into the open room. He is making straight for Clark and me; his grease-stained, worn, black suit hanging loose about his wasted figure, a something not unlike a small decanter-stopper glistening on the bosom of his soiled, collarless, white shirt, his singularly repulsive face growing clearer as he comes, the receding forehead and small, weak, close-set piercing eyes, the high cheek-bones and bristling black mustache over a drooping mouth stained with tobacco. He walks straight up to Clark.

"You was here last night?" he asks with rising inflection and a German accent.

"Yes," says Clark. "I come up to-night to see a fellow I know," he adds of his own initiative.

"Do you see him?" says the clerk.

"No."

"Was you and your pal going to take beds?"

"No."

And in the awkward situation thus created, Clark and I go out once more from the luxury of warmth and shelter.

The pavements are now in possession of crowds returning from the theatres, and at certain crossings is a rush for cable-cars going south. We turn down Quincy Street. It is still almost an hour before midnight. Simultaneously we notice a deep, wide entry of a business house, so deep that its inner corners are quite dry, and one of them is fairly shielded from the wind. With a mutual impulse we turn in, and crouch close together on the paved floor in the shade of the sheltered corner.

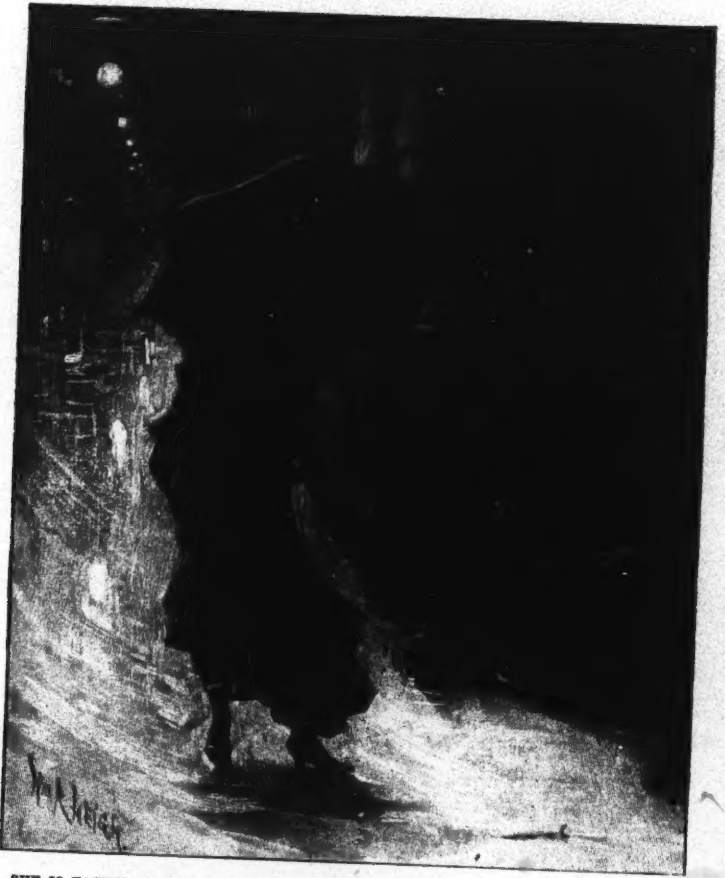
We sit in perfect silence for a time. Our teeth have begun again to chatter, and it is difficult to speak. Besides, we have nothing to say beyond the wish that we were fed and warmed and sheltered, and this is such a deepening longing to us both that we have begun to keep a reverent silence about it.

Not half a score of people pass us as we crouch there through a quarter of an hour or more, and none of them sees us, which is fortunate; for one of the number is a policeman, who walks down the other side, swinging his club in easy rhythm to his sauntering steps.

But now once more we feel the tension of anxious waiting, for again we hear the sound of footsteps fast approaching. A lifted umbrella first appears, and under it a woman's dark skirt, all wet about the hem, and clinging to her ankles as she walks and vainly tries to hold it free from the sloppy pavement. Her eyes are on the ground, and she is humming softly to herself, and we think that she is safely past, when both of us start suddenly to a little cry, an exclamation of surprise:

"Oh-h-h! what in h—— are you boys doing there?" And the question has in it a note of light-hearted merriment, as though the words had come upon a wave of rippling laughter.

She is facing us near at hand, her head framed in the dark umbrella which rests upon her



SHE IS FACING US NEAR AT HAND, HER HEAD FRAMED IN THE DARK UMBRELLA WHICH RESTS UPON HER SHOULDER.

shoulder, and her face in the full side-light of a neighboring window. Out of large dark eyes she is looking straight at us, and I mark at once the clean-cut pencilling of her eyebrows against a skin of natural pallor, and the backward sweep of black hair from a low forehead and about her ears. She is no beauty, but her mouth is one of almost faultless drawing, large and sensitive and firm, with a dimple at each corner, and her chin of perfect moulding fades into the graceful lines of a well-rounded throat.

I am struck dumb for the moment, but Clark is disturbed in no wise by the situation, and is answering her in perfect calmness that we have taken shelter there, and "won't you go on," he asks, "for you may attract to us the notice of a cop."

"He's not coming this way yet awhile," she retorted; "I met him just now at the corner."

They fall into easy, natural dialogue, and the girl soon learns that we are newly come to Chicago seeking work, and hungry and shelterless we are waiting for the right hour in which to go to the station-house.

"And why did you ever come to this God-condemned town?" she asks. "There's thousands of boys like you here, and no jobs for none of you."

There is quick resentment in Clark's sharp rejoinder:

"And why in h—— did *you* come?" But the girl's good-nature is unruffled; you simply feel an instinctive tightening of her grip upon herself as her figure straightens slightly to the reply:

"I come to hustle, sonny, and I guess this is as good a place to hustle in as any. I'm in —— hard luck to-night, for I ain't made a cent, and I met that cop on —— Street. He's spotted me. I had to go down into my stocking and give him my last dollar to fix him, or else he'd have run me in, and I've been up three times this week. The judge told me he'd send me to the Bridewell next time." She is a girl of eighteen, or, perhaps, of twenty years.

In another moment I see her lift her young, unfaltering eyes to a passing stranger, and in them, unashamed, is the nameless questioning which takes surest hold on hell.

And now she has turned again, and one soiled, gloveless hand is outstretched to us.

"I'm going, boys," she says. "Good-night. You are in harder luck than me, for I ain't hungry and I've got a place to sleep, so you take this. It ain't much, but it's all I've got. Good luck to you. Good-night."

Men who have felt it never speak lightly of fear, nor are they ashamed to own to it—the fear that is fear, when unprepared you face a sudden danger whose measure you cannot know; when the scalp tightens with a creeping movement and the hair lifts itself on end, and each muscle stiffens in the cold of swift paralysis, while your brain throbs with the sudden rush of hot blood. But there is a feeling beyond that—"when the nerves prick and tingle and the heart is sick," and the soul in ineffable agony of doubt and fear cries through a black and Godless void for some answer to the mystery of life.

A silver coin is glistening in Clark's open palm.

"There's two beers in this, partner, and a free lunch for both of us," he is saying. "Let's go to a saloon."

Five minutes later he leaves me in high indignation, with a "Stay, then, and be damned!" and I feel some uncertainty about his coming back.

Soon I fall into the dreamless torpor which comes to relieve the too-heavy hearted. But from out its stupor I waken sharply to quickest sensibility. Quivering darts of pain are shooting swiftly through my body from a burning centre in my thigh. A night watchman stands over me, holding a dark lantern to my face. He has roused me with a brutal kick. In my heart black murder reigns alone for a moment, and then I remember what I am, and I limp into the street speechless under the watchman's curses.

I had misjudged Clark. I have not waited long when I see him walking toward me. He is warmed and fed, and has soon forgot his earlier wrath in eagerness to "do" the night watchman. From this, however, it is not difficult to dissuade him on the ground of the weakness of our legal status as compared with his.

We walk now toward Harrison Street, and as we enter it, there shines high from out the darkness an illumined face of a clock with its hands pointing to a few minutes past the hour of twelve. A freight-train is drawing slowly into the station-yard, creaking and jolting with the varying tug of a locomotive that pants deeply to a steady pull, and then puffs hard in sudden spurts which send its wheels "racing" on the icy rails. The train stands still with a sound of communicated bumping which loses itself far down the yard, and then there come swarming from the cars a score or two of tramps who have beaten their way into the city. They know their ground, for silent and stooping in the wet they make straight, as with a common impulse, to the station-house on the corner.

"We'll leave them go in first," says Clark, "it's all the better for us," and then we walk up and down before the plain brick building, with the lights streaming from its basement and first-floor windows.

By a short flight of steps we finally enter a small passage which opens into a large, square room. A few police officers and reporters are standing about in casual conversation. One officer, with unerring judgment of our need, beckons us his way, and, without a word, he points us down the steps into the basement. A locked door of iron grating blocks the way at the foot of the steps, and we stand there for some minutes while a newly arrived prisoner is being registered and searched. Behind a high desk sits a typical, robust officer who asks questions and notes the answers in his book, and beside him, near at hand, a matronly woman is sewing with an air of domesticity and entire oblivion to her unusual surroundings, while near the prisoner before the desk, stand two policemen who have "run him in."

All these are in a wide corridor which extends east and west through the depth of the building. In its south wall are some half dozen doors of iron grating, each opening into a small passage at right angles to the main corridor, and the cells range along the sides of these.

The prisoner has soon been disposed of. The officer on duty then unlocks the door behind which we stand, and admits us before the desk. The registrar looks up, an expression of irritation in his face.

"More men to spend the night?" he asks.

"Well, turn in," he adds, with a jerk of his head to the left. "I've got no more room for names. I guess I've entered two hundred lodgers and more already to-night."

Clark and I need no further directions. Overflowing through the open door of the farthest passage upon the floor of the main corridor are the sprawling figures of men asleep. We walk in among them.

"If we ain't never had 'em, I guess we'll catch 'em to-night," says Clark, softly in my ear, and the words take on a sickening significance as we enter an unventilated atmosphere of foulest pollution, and we see more clearly the frowzy, ragged garments of unclean men, and have glimpses here and there of caking filth upon a naked limb.

The wisdom of a late hour of retiring is at once apparent when we have sight of the inner passage. Not a square foot of the dark, concrete floor is

OVERFLOWING THROUGH THE OPEN DOOR OF THE FARTHEST PASSAGE UPON THE FLOOR OF THE MAIN CORRIDOR ARE THE SPRAWLING FIGURES OF MEN ASLEEP.

visible. The space is packed with men all lying on their right sides with their legs drawn up, and each man's legs pressed close in behind those of the man in front.

Clark draws from an inside pocket a roll of old newspapers, and hands me one. We spread them on the pavement as a Mohammedan unrolls his mat for prayers, and then we take off our boots and coats. Our soaked, pulpy boots we fold in our jackets and use them as pillows, and we soften our bed by spreading over the newspapers our outer coats, which thus have a chance to dry in the warmth of the room and in that which comes from our bodies. We need no covering in the steaming heat in which we lie, and I can see at a glance that Clark and I are more fortunate than most of the other men, for few of them have outer coats, and in their threadbare, filthy garments they lie with nothing but paper between them and the floor, their heads pillowed on their arms.

By no means are all of them asleep. In the thick air above their reclining figures there is an unceasing murmur of low, gruff voices. What words can fit the hellish quality of that strange converse? It is not human, though it comes from living men; it has no humor though it touches life most intimately; it knows hot hate and craving need and blank indifference, but all these feelings speak alike a tongue of utter blasphemy; and it is not prurient even, though it reeks with coarse obscenity.

And in the men themselves, how widely severed from all things human is the prevailing type! —Their bloated, unwashed flesh and unkempt hair; their hideous ugliness of face, unreclaimed by marks of inner strength and force, but revealing rather, in the relaxation of sleep, a deepening of the lines of weakness, until you read in plainest characters the paralysis of the will. And then there are the stealthy, restless eyes of those who are awake, eyes set in faces which lack utterly the strength of honest labor and even that of criminal wit.

But there are marked exceptions to the prevailing type, men like Clark, sound and strong in flesh, and having about them the signs of habitual decency, and their faces stamped with the open frankness which comes of earning a living by honest work. Some of these are young immigrants, newly come, most evidently, and I picture their rude awakenings from golden dreams of a land of plenty.

Clark is fast asleep beside me, but I cannot sleep for gnawing hunger and the dull pain of lying bruised and sore upon the hard, paved floor.

There is sudden, nervous movement near me.

Looking up I see a man seated straight, tugging frantically at his shirt, and swearing viciously the while in muffled tones. In a moment he has torn the garment off, and his crooked, bony fingers are passing swiftly over the shrivelled skin of his old, lean body in search of his tormentors, and his oaths come lisping from his toothless mouth. The men about him are ordering him, with deepening curses, to lie down and keep still.

The former quiet soon returns, and in it I lie thinking of another world I know, a world of men and women whose plane of life is removed from this by all the distance of the infinite. Faith and love and high resolve are there, the inspirers of true living, and courage spurs to unflinching effort, and hope lights the way of unsuccess and gives vision through the vale of sorrow and of death. And the common intercourse is the perfect freedom which is bred of high allegiance to inborn courtesy and honor.

What living link is there that joins these worlds together, and gives vital meaning to the confirmation of brotherhood spoken in the divine words of the Apostle: "We, being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another?"

Pondering this mystery I fall asleep, and so ends my first day in the army of the unemployed.

CHAPTER II

LIVING BY ODD JOBS

No. — Blue Island Avenue, Chicago,
Saturday, December 19, 1891.

When life is lived in its simplest terms, one is brought to marvellous intimacy with vital processes. And through this intimacy no disclosure is more wonderful than that of nature's quick response. Exhausted by hard labor, until your muscles quiver in impotent loss of energy, you sit down to eat and drink, and rise up to the play of a physical revival wherein you are renewed by the mystery of intussusception, and your responsive mood quickens to the tension of the involution whence life's energies flow new and fresh again. Another hour may bring as great a change, and the full tide of your rising spirits may set swiftly back. It is as though you were a little child once more, and your moods obedient to little things.

When living is a daily struggle with the problems of what you shall eat and what you shall drink, and wherewithal you shall be clothed, you take no anxious thought for the morrow, quite content to let the morrow take thought for the things of itself, for sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Your heart will leap with hope at any brightening of your lot, and will sink in deep despair when the way grows dark. The road of your salvation is by the strait gate and the narrow way of courage and persistent effort and provident foresight, and whence are these to come to you whose courage is born of warmth and a square meal, and whose despair comes with returning hunger? A world all bright with hope can be had on the terms of heat and food, and the sense of these can be induced for a nickel in a "barrel-house."

When Clark and I awakened in the early morning, after our first night in the station, the dull gray dawn was dimming the gas, and in the lurid light we could see a writhing movement in the prostrate coiling mass of reeking humanity about us. We had lost the feeling of hunger, but a feverish thirst was burning to the roots of our tongues. We could scarcely move for the pain of sore and stiffened muscles, and I thought at first that my right leg was paralyzed from the night-watchman's kick. Only a few hours before, we had entered the station-house from the streets in eager willingness for any escape from their cold exposure, and now with intensified desire we longed for the outer air at any cost of hardship.

But we were not free to go out at once. The officer on duty brusquely ordered us back among the men when we approached him with a request to be allowed to leave. We were greeted with a burst of mocking glee as we walked back to our places, and among the comments was a call to me: "What have you pinched, whiskers?"

The reason for the delay was soon apparent, for in a few moments we were all marched down the main corridor and into the passage which opened nearest to the registrar's desk. There we waited, closely huddled, the iron door locked upon us, while an examination was made as to whether any of the prisoners had been robbed. When all was reported right, the door was unlocked and we were allowed to file slowly out past the entrance of the kitchen. There stood the cook with an assistant, and he gave to each man as he passed a bowl of steaming coffee and a piece of bread. We drank the coffee at a gulp, and each man was eating bread with wolfish bites as he climbed the steps and walked out into the street.

Every succeeding breath in the outer air seemed to carry its cleansing coolness farther down into our lungs. It was like the feeling of

THE POLICE-STATION BREAKFAST.

cold water to a parched throat. The sky was overcast, but the storm had ceased, and the temperature had fallen to several degrees of frost, and this gave a freshness and vigor to the air which brightened the world for us amazingly.

We could walk dry-shod in the measure that we could walk at all. Clark was rather stiff at the start, and I could make scarcely any progress alone, but Clark generously lent me a shoulder, and his arm was frequently around me at the street crossings. All this was most naturally done. The thought of deserting me because I had gone lame seemed never to occur to him. He must have known that his own good chances were seriously lessened by his having me upon his hands, but he accepted this as though it were inevitable. There was no mawkish sympathy in his manner; he was in for practical helpfulness only, and now and again he would withdraw his support, and, standing off, would watch me execute his command: "Now take a brace, partner, and let's see you go it alone."

At Van Buren Street we turned to the Rock Island Railway station, and in the waiting-room we quenched our thirst as best we could at the drinking-fountain. Many of the men had taken the direction of South Clark Street. I asked Clark why.

"There's barrel-houses down there," he explained.

The word had come upon me repeatedly in the last day, with only a dim suggestion of its meaning, and so I owned to my ignorance.

"A barrel-house?" said Clark. "That's a dive where they keep cheap whiskey on tap; you can get a pint for a nickel. It's about the size of the whiskey you want for the thirst you get in a station-house, I'm thinking," he added. And then more to himself than to me: "I'm damned if I don't wish I had some now to wash that air out of my mouth."

His face was very wry, and there was returning to it the expression of hopelessness which it had worn while we crouched for shelter in the doorway on the night before. It cut you to the quick. His light-blue eyes, which had drawn me from the first by the honest directness of their gaze, now began to lose their human, speaking quality and to take on the dumb, beseeching look of a hunted beast.

The bread and coffee and clean air had revived us both. I dreaded a swift relapse, and so I urged a wash, in the hope of its bracing effect. But where could we achieve this simple need? Certainly not in the wash-room of the station, for we had trespassed dangerously far in drinking at the fountain, and the eye of more than one employee was already upon us. There was no hotel into whose public lavatory we could pass unchallenged, and not so much upon Clark's account as upon mine. There remained the open lake; so we walked up Van Buren Street and across the Lake Park and the railway tracks to the edge of the outer harbor. Here we knelt among the broken fragments of ice and bathed our faces and hands. It was vigorous exercise to rub them dry before they chapped in the winter wind. It warmed us, and the feeling of relative cleanness was enheartening. And then I sat down and dipped up water in one hand and applied it, until I had a cold saturated cushion against the bruise on my leg. This wrought wonderful relief until the wet cloth froze, and then it chafed the bruise badly for a time.

But I could walk alone and fairly well now. We turned up Michigan Avenue and followed it to the river, discussing, as we went, a plan of action. Clark was for going at once to the far North Side in search of employment at various iron-works and foundries there, of whose existence he had learned. I longed for the means of early relief from the reviving pangs of hunger through some chance job which I hoped that we might obtain. This was a new idea to Clark.

He was a raw recruit in the army of the unemployed. That he might look for other work than that which was in the line of his trade had not yet presented itself to him as a possibility. He shrank from it with the instinctive dislike of a conservative for a new way. And all our early essays confirmed him in his aversion. We went from door to door of the great wholesale business houses at the head of Michigan Avenue. Large delivery trucks stood lined up along the curb on both sides, and there was the bustle across the pavement of much loading and unloading of wares. Workmen in leather aprons were handling packed boxes with the swiftness and dexterity of long practice. At half a score of houses we sought out an overseer or a superintendent and asked to be set to work; but, without a moment's hesitation in a single case, we were told, with varying degrees of emphasis, that we were not needed, not even for some chance, exceptional demand.

It is difficult to describe the discouragement which results from such an experience. All about you is the tumultuous industry of a great city. You feel something of the splendid power of its ceaseless productivity; you guess at its vast consuming; and in the din of its noisy traffic you watch the swift shuttles which weave the varied fabric of its business. Its complexities and interdependencies bear down upon you with an inspiring sense of the volume of human life spent in ministering to life. Its multitudes throng you upon the streets, and you read in countless faces the story of unending struggle to keep abreast with pressing duty. Work? Everywhere about you there is work, stupendous, appalling, cumulative in its volume and intensity with the increasing momentum of a world-wide trade, which is driven by the natural forces of demand and supply and keenest competition. Men everywhere are staggering under burdens too grievous to be borne. And here are you idle, yet counting it the greatest boon if you might but add your strength to the mighty struggle.

Is there then no demand for labor? There is most importunate, insatiable demand for all work of finer skilfulness, for all men who can assume responsibility and give new efficiency to productive forces, or direct them into channels for the development of new wealth. But in the presence of this demand Clark and I stood asking hire for the potential physical energies of two hungry human bodies, and, standing so, we were but two units in a like multitude of unemployed.

When we reached the river I had difficulty in dissuading Clark from his confirmed resolve to pass on to the North Side in pursuit of his earlier plan. He had no thought of leaving me behind. He urged that a chance job was as probable along his route as any other. But he consented at last to another hour of search in the immediate vicinity.

We were in South Water Street; we walked west until we had crossed State and had come to the corner of Dearborn Street. Walking became increasingly difficult, for the pavements were piled high with boxes and barrels and crates full of all manner of fruits and vegetables, and wooden coops packed with live game and poultry. A narrow passage remained between the piles. Through this we picked our way, carefully avoiding empty boxes and hand-trucks and stray measures that lay strewn about. On each side of the street buildings of brick or stone, fairly uniform in height, rose four-storied and many windowed, with the monotony of their straight lines relieved by the curves of arched windows, each bearing a protruding keystone. Over the wide fronts of the shops sagged awnings in various stages of faded color and unrepair, their iron frames lying uncovered and unsightly against the fluted canvas. Along both curbs were backed continuous rows of drays and trucks and market-wagons. The two lines of horses stood blanketed in the cold, facing each other across a narrow opening down the stone-paved street, and more than anything else they resembled lines of picketed cavalry.

We soon felt the friction of the crowd as it steered its devious course along the littered pavement, brushing against groups of purchasers who stood examining sample wares, and against idlers leaning to the doorposts with hands in their trousers' pockets, and through the cross currents of drivers and shopmen who busily took on or discharged the loads.

The very confusion and hurry of the scene, while they suggested the chance of work, were really an added embarrassment to our search. More than under other circumstances we shrank from asking employment from men hard driven by the "instant need of things." And this instinctive feeling was fully justified in the course of the actual quest. Of common hands there was an abundance, and ours, held out for sale, were of the nature of a provocation to men cumbered by complex care. Occasionally we could not get access to an employer; and when we did, we sometimes received a civil "no," but commonly an emphatic one in a vent of evil temper.

At one moment an old gentleman was looking up at us over the tops of his spectacles as we stood at the foot of his desk. There was much shrewdness in his eye, and his face was deeply lined, but his speech revealed the frankness of a courteous nature.

"No, I'm sorry," he was saying, "I'm sorry that I can give you nothing to do. The fact is, I've got to lay off three men at the end of the week. My business don't warrant my keeping them. I hope you'll be more fortunate elsewhere."

A minute later we were standing waiting for the attention of a square-shouldered, thick-necked dealer who was in angry dispute with a subordinate. His face was still distorted when he turned upon us, and his dilating eyes sought mine with an expression of growing impatience.

"We are looking for a job, sir," I began. "Can you give us a chance to work?"

"No, I can't, —— you! Out you go, now!" And then to a man near the door: "—— your soul, Kelly, I've told you to keep these bums out of here. If you let in another one I'll fire you, as sure as hell."

The hour was nearly up, and there was apparently nothing for it but to start north in accordance with Clark's plan and in hope of better fortune. I felt as though I could not go. I was

"OUT YOU GO, NOW."

fairly faint with hunger, and a curious lightheadedness had possessed me. The sights and sounds about us took on a strange unreality, and I could not rid myself of the feeling of moving and speaking in a dream. Again and again I was conscious of a repetition of identical experience, recalling the same circumstances in some faintly remembered past, and even before I spoke at times, I had an eerie sense of having uttered the coming sentences before under precisely similar conditions. The one fact to which consciousness held with unshaken certainty was the strong craving for food. And this was not so much a positive pain, as it was a sickening, benumbing influence. My hand would all but go out in reach for fruit that lay exposed about me, and the thought that the act would be wrong, and would get me into trouble, followed the impulse afar, and was forced into action as a checking conviction by a distinct effort of the will.

We turned into one shop more. The pavement in front was heaped with crates packed with oranges, and bound around the centre and the ends with iron bands. Three high they stood on end, and four and five in a row along the curb, while backed up against them were two empty trucks with slats sloping capaciously at the sides.

There was confusion within the shop. A dealer and two drivers were swearing loudly, each on a line of independent grievance. Two or three shopmen were bustling about in zealous execution of orders. Men who may have been customers were waiting impatiently for attention, and clerks added to the confusion as with papers in hand they passed quickly in and out of offices at the rear. It appeared the most unpromising place for us that we had entered, and we were prepared for a refusal more than commonly emphatic, when to our almost overwhelming surprise the dealer hailed us:

"Say, you men, do you want a job? Go out and load them oranges, and I'll give you fifty cents apiece."

We did not stagger nor clasp each other's hands in an ecstasy of relief; we simply turned without a word, and hurrying to the street, we began to lift the heavy crates into the box of an empty truck.

Clark was the first to speak.

"Fifty cents, partner, fifty cents!" he kept repeating in an awed undertone. He seemed to be trying to get firm hold of the fact of our almost incredible good fortune, and then, in a voice that was thick with a heaving sob, he said:

"We'll feed, partner, we'll feed!"

But we did not "feed" at once when the money was actually in our possession. The first load had gone fairly well, for the certain prospect of food nerved us to such a degree that, weakened though we were, we scarcely felt the effort of loading, and we were quite unaware that our bare hands were being scratched by the sharp ends of iron bands about the boxes until we felt the flow of blood. But before the second load was half on, our nerve began to fail us. Each succeeding crate went on board with a greater effort. And the task itself grew harder, as the tiers of boxes rose higher in the truck. It seemed as though the driver would never be satisfied with the load; but at last he called a halt, and, mounting his seat, drove off in the direction in which the other truck had gone.

We were paid at once, Clark a half-dollar coin and I two silver quarters. We held our money with the grip of drowning men upon a saving support. We sat down upon a doorstep to rest. We were panting hard, and the circles under Clark's eyes had grown darker, and his thin bloodless lips were quivering as with cold. But his spirits were rising, and his eyes grew brighter every moment, and his pale face, already flushed with exercise, glowed again with the pleasure of anticipating the sure breaking of our fast.

When we set off, Clark was in the full swing of a provident plan.

"There's lots of saloons," he said, "where you can get a free lunch with a glass of beer." And he began to point them out to me along our route. Large signs in front competed for the drifting trade. On one was painted a huge schooner brimming over with frothing beer, and it bore the legend: "The largest glass of beer for five cents in Chicago." Another sign claimed for its shop, "The best free lunch in the city," and others told of hot sausages with every drink, or a certain number of oysters in any style, or hot stews at choice, and bread and cold meats and cheese in unstinted abundance.

All this so exactly met our needs. And there were warmth and shelter and companionship within the saloons, and having drunk at the bar and eaten at the free-lunch counter, we should be free to sit at ease about the fire. And how cheap it all was! For fifteen cents, Clark was saying, we could get three fair meals a day, and even ten cents would save us from the actual pain of hunger. There was no other chance that compared with this. The utmost that five cents would buy in the cheapest eating-houses was a cup of coffee and two small rolls. There were ten-cent meals to be had, but they were not the

"WE'LL FEED, PARTNER, WE'LL FEED."

equals of a free lunch and a glass of beer. To get their equivalent in a restaurant you must spend fifteen cents at least.

My objections were wholly unintelligible to Clark. From these he would bring the argument back to the question of wise management, and there he had me. Presently he lost his temper, and told me that I was a "damn fool," and that I might go "to a restaurant, or to hell," as I chose, but that for his part he was going in for a free lunch and a glass of beer. But before we separated he was so far pacified that he agreed to meet me in the early evening in front of the shop where we had earned our money.

It was at the juncture of Dearborn and Madison Streets that we parted. Not far from there I found a restaurant whose placards in the windows offered tempting dishes at astonishingly cheap rates. "Roast beef and baked potato, fifteen cents," was printed on the one that lured me most. I walked inside and sat down at a small round table, spread with a cloth which was faultlessly clean. A long line of such tables reached down the centre of the deep room in inviting whiteness, and was flanked on each side by a row of others, oblong in shape, pressed close in against the walls. To a height of several feet above these tables the walls were wainscoted with mirrors, and the white ceiling was gay with paper festoons. Customers were streaming in, for it was about noon. Most of these were evidently men from neighboring business houses, but there were workmen, too, some of them in blue jeans; and the first fear that I felt at entering, the fear of having come to a place too respectable to accept me as a guest, vanished completely, and gave place to a feeling of security and comfort.

A corps of colored waiters were hurrying through the narrow passages between the tables, bearing aloft tin trays heaped with dishes; to the noisy clatter and hum of the diners, they added a babel of discordant sound as they shouted in unintelligible phrase their varying orders into the dim regions at the rear, whence answered a muffled echo to each call.

My order came in a deep dinner-plate, a slice of roast beef, generous and juicy, shading from brown to the rich, raw red of the centre that oozed with a strengthening flow. With it was a large baked potato, piping hot, and when I broke it upon the table with a blow of my fist, the fragrant steam rose in a cloud to my face.

At the end of a fast of thirty-six hours, which had been relieved only by a few swallows of coffee and a little bread, I knew enough to eat slowly. But I was unprepared for the difficulty which this precaution involved. As when one swallows cautiously in quenching a consuming thirst, and checks by sheer force the muscles which would drink with choking draughts, so it was only by a sustained restraint that I ate carefully, in small morsels, until the brutish hunger was appeased. And when all the beef and potato, and an amazing quantity of the bread, with which the table was abundantly supplied, were gone, I could not forego the expenditure of five cents more for a cup of coffee, by the aid of which another deep inroad upon the bread was soon accomplished.

At the desk where I paid the amount stamped upon a check which the waiter had left at my place, I inquired for the manager. When I received his assurance that he could give me no work as a dishwasher, nor, in fact, in any capacity in his restaurant, and that he knew of no opening for me anywhere, I walked out into the streets once more and found my way to the public reading-room of the Young Men's Christian Association. There I looked through the advertising columns of the morning newspapers. Of applications for positions there was an almost countless number, but of openings offered there were few, and not one of these was promising to a man whose only resource was unskilled labor. Reading on somewhat aimlessly through the day's news I presently fell asleep, and was soon awakened by a young secretary, who was shaking me vigorously by the shoulder.

"Wake up, my man, wake up!" he was saying. "You can't sleep in here. You must keep awake, or go out."

I went out. It was easier to keep awake in the streets than in that warm room, and besides, I must not slacken the search for work.

By the time that I had fully recovered possession of my senses I found that an aimless walk had taken me near to the railway station, at whose fountain Clark and I had drunk in the morning. A crowd of newly arrived passengers was issuing into Van Buren Street, many of them carrying hand-luggage. With a flash of association there came to my mind the recollection of the boys and men who follow you persistently on Cortlandt Street between the Pennsylvania station and the elevated railway, with importunate offers to carry your bag for a dime. I wondered that this industry had not occurred to me before as a resource in my present need.

In a moment I was plying it with high hope of success, but in the next I stood agape at a fierce onslaught of street Arabs and men. One or two had picked up stones with which they menaced me. All of them were shouting oaths and violent abuse, and one half-grown boy, who was the first to reach me, held a clenched fist to my face, as he screamed hoarsely profane threats, and his keen dark eyes blazed with anger, and his lean face worked convulsively in the strength of violent passion. It appeared that I had trespassed upon a field which was pre-empted by a "ring" well-organized for its possession and cultivation, and for the further purpose of excluding competition.

I fell back to a safe distance. On the opposite side of the street I saw a gentleman carrying a heavy portmanteau. He was well past the beat of the organized ring about the station. In an instant I was beside him, and was offering to carry his load. He seemed disinclined to pay any heed at first, but he stopped in a moment with the remark:

"I'll give you a quarter to carry this bag to my hotel."

I assented joyfully. I swung the bag to my shoulder, and passed on ahead, while the traveller walked close behind me in the crowd, and directed me to his hotel in Wabash Avenue, where, together with what I already had, I was soon fifty-five cents to the good.

That afternoon yielded nothing more either in prospect of a steady job or in the fruit of chance employment, and at dusk I stood again in South Water Street anxiously awaiting Clark's return. It was dark when he came at last, and as he approached me in the fierce light of the electric arc which gleamed from the top of the high iron post near by, I could see that he was paler and more careworn, and deeply dejected. We sat down for a few moments upon a doorstep. The street was nearly deserted, and the lights shone dismally through its blackened length. Clark began to tell me of his afternoon. No chance of work had been revealed beyond the vague suggestion of one boss that he might need an extra man in a week or two. Moreover Clark had found the shops so far away that he had been obliged, both in his going and return, to take a Lincoln Avenue cable-car, and so was out a fruitless ten cents in fare. He said very little beyond the bare statement of his afternoon's experience. He was sitting with his elbows resting on his knees, with his hands clasped, and his flaxen head bowed almost to his arms. I knew that he was struggling with thoughts and feelings which he could not analyze, nor in the least express, and I waited in silence beside him.

The whole experience was new to him. He had been out of work before, but he had had a home, and in its shelter he could tide over the de-

ALL OF THEM WERE SHOUTING OATHS AND VIOLENT ABUSE.

pression which had cost him his job. Now his home was gone, and he was adrift without support. But he was young and strong and accustomed to work, and all that he sought was a chance to win his way. And yet his very struggles for a footing seemed to sink him into deeper difficulty. The conditions which he was forced to face seemed to conspire against the possibility of his success.

It was the feeling inspired by this seeming truth, a dim, dull feeling vaguely realized, yet awful, that bore hard upon him, and that loomed portentous as with remorseless fate. He was struggling with it in an agony of helpless discouragement, and presently he found utterance for it in concrete form.

" One boss I struck for a job, I thought he was going to give it to me sure," he said. " He asked me where I'd worked before, and why I'd quit, and how long I'd been at the trade. And just then I felt something crawling on my neck. It was a crumb, —— it! The boss seen it, too. He got mad, —— him! and he chewed a rag, and he said if he had twenty jobs, he wouldn't give one to a lousy hobo like me." Clark was growing increasingly vehement in his recital. He rose to his feet and bent over me, while the hot words came hissing between his teeth:

"I ain't never been like this in my life before, and, great God Almighty! I'd be clean if I could!" After a moment he added, in a hard, clear tone:

"We've got some money, partner, let's go and get a drink."

My extra quarter flashed into my mind as a hopeful resource. I held out the two quarters and a nickel on the palm of my hand where the street light would strike them. I told Clark of my windfall, and of the possible chance of many another such to help us out in the future.

"I earned this in ten minutes," I said, holding out a quarter, "and I know where twenty cents of it will buy us each a hot stew and all the bread that we can eat. And then I've found a lodging-house in South Clark Street where we can each get a wash and a fairly decent bed in good air for fifteen cents, and we'll have enough left to keep us in food to-morrow."

Clark hesitated. I enlarged on the attractiveness of the restaurant and the comfort of eating at leisure at one of its clean tables, and the long, unbroken rest that we should have at the lodgings. Clark was tired to the bone, and he yielded. It was my turn now to give him a shoulder as we walked to our evening meal.

We were soon seated opposite each other at one of the side tables of the restaurant. The lights were reproduced in myriad reflections in the mirrors, and we seemed to be sitting near the centre of a vast dining-hall with multitudes at its countless tables and its farther portions fading in the perspective of dim distance. The Irish stew and bread were indescribably good, and in the company of other diners we felt that we were among our fellow-men and of them, and we were free for the time from the torment of that haunting isolation which keeps one unspeakably lonely even in the thronging crowd.

Light-hearted and full of hope again we walked to the lodging-house, and after a wash we were soon fast asleep, each on a rough cot in a wooden closet, the electric lights streaming in upon us through the wire netting which was spread over the tops of long lines of such sleeping booths, that stood separated by thin board partitions like the bath-houses at the sea.

Friday and Saturday came and passed with the same vain search for work, and with varying fortune in odd jobs. We took separate routes through the day, but always agreed at parting upon an hour and place of meeting. The Young Men's Christian Association rooms became our rendezvous. When we met there on Friday evening I had a quarter and Clark was high-spirited and opulent with forty-five cents to his credit. He was full of his good fortune. In the middle of the forenoon he had chanced upon the job of shifting coal in the cellar of a private house. The work having been finished he was allowed to wash himself in the kitchen with an abundance of hot water and soap and the luxury of a towel. And then he sat down at the kitchen-table to a dinner of hot turkey and cranberry-sauce, and any number of vegetables, and all the bread and coffee he wanted, and finally a towering saucer of plum-pudding. Fifty cents was added to the dinner in payment for his work, and, as he had had a dime left in his pocket after breakfast, he did not hesitate at an expenditure of fifteen cents in car-fare to facilitate his search for work.

My quarter had come, as on the day before, by way of a porter's service—only this time from a woman. I caught sight of her as she was crossing the Lake Front from the station of the Illinois Central Railroad at the head of Randolph Street. Under her left arm were parcels of various shapes and sizes, and with some apparent effort she carried a bag in her right hand. The parcels were troublesome, for now and again she was obliged to rest the bag upon the pavement until she had adjusted her arm to a surer hold upon them. She was a woman nearing middle life, well dressed in warm, comfortable, winter garments which bore the general marks of the prevailing mode.

So completely had the present way of living possessed me that I fear that my first impulse at sight of her was born of the hope of a porter's fee and not of the thought of helpfulness. But I grew more interested as I neared her, and increasingly embarrassed. There was a touch of beautiful coloring in her round, full face, and about the mouth was an expression of rare sweetness, while her dark-blue eyes looked out through gold-rimmed spectacles with preternatural seriousness. But my eye was drawn most by the hair that appeared beneath her bonnet; a heavy mass it was, and tawny red like that of Titian's "Magdalene" in the Pitti. She might have been a shopkeeper's wife come to the city from the suburbs or from some provincial village, and she was nervous in the noisy atmosphere of the unfamiliar. I had not yet offered my services to a woman in this new capacity of street porter, and I found myself puzzled as to how I should approach her. But the actual situation solved the difficulty, for when we were but a few steps apart, her bundles fell again into a state of irritating insecurity under her arm and she was again obliged to adjust them.

Instantly I was beside her, bowing, hat in hand:

"I beg your pardon, madam; won't you let me help you?"

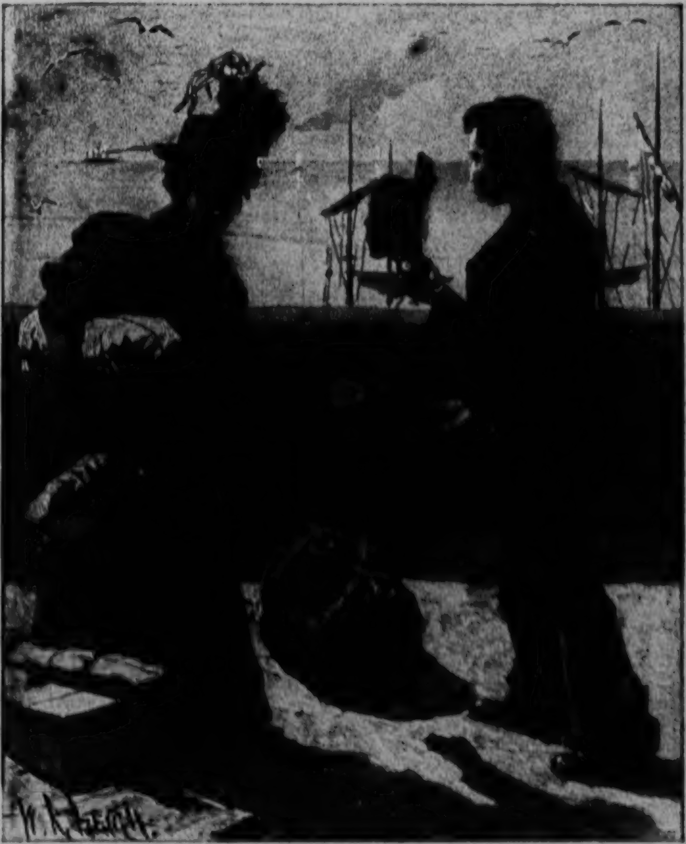
She drew back and looked at me perplexed, and I could see the gathering alarm in her wide, innocent, serious eyes.

"Oh, no, thanks!" she said, and I knew that all that she had ever heard of bunco-steerers and of the wily crafts of the town was mingling in terrifying confusion in her mind with thoughts of possible escape.

My distress was as great as her own. I had forgotten for the moment how dismaying to a woman must be an unexpected offer of service from a sudden apparition of full grown, masculine, street poverty. I felt guilty as though I had wantonly frightened a child. A parcel had fallen to the ground. I picked it up, and returned it to her with an apology most spontaneous and sincere. But as I turned away in haste to escape from the embarrassment of the situation, I found myself checked to my great surprise by a timid question: "Perhaps you can tell me the shortest way to number — La Salle Street?" she said.

My hat was off at once.

"It will give me great pleasure to show you the way," I replied, and not waiting for a refusal,



SHE DREW BACK AND LOOKED AT ME PERPLEXED.

I set off with, "Won't you follow me, pray?" over my shoulder.

At the curb of the first crossing I waited for her.

"Keep close to me," I said, "and I'll see you safe across the street." But I ignored the parcels, which were once more awry. On the opposite pavement she stopped.

"Would you mind holding my bag," she asked, "while I get a better grip on these bundles?" I accepted the bag with an assurance of the pleasure that it gave me. It was soon followed by a parcel, the largest and most unwieldy of the lot. She finished adjusting the others, and then extended her free hand for the remaining parcel.

"We'll carry this between us," I said, "and I'll walk with you to the place."

Without a word of demur she took firm hold of the stout twine with which the parcel was tied, and thus linked we set off together down Randolph Street to La Salle. Conversation was nearly impossible, for we were edging our way for the most part along crowded pavements.

When we stood for a few moments at a crossing, waiting for a check in the tide of traffic, she confided to me that she had come to Chicago from "——ville" to see a lawyer.

"You are often in the city," I suggested, delighted to talk on the pleasant, easy terms which were springing up between us.

"Oh, no! I ain't," she said, and then she was innocently superior to the compliment implied in my feigned surprise, and she began to question me about myself.

"What do you do for a living, young man?"

"I am out of work, and I am looking for a job," I said, evasively.

"What is your line of work?" she continued; for the bucolic mind was bent on a sure footing from which to launch out into further inquiry.

"I shall be glad of any work that I can get," I said. "Any work at all," I reiterated, thinking that she might put me in the way of a job.

"Where do you live when you're to home?" and the question indicated a new tack in the quest for certitude.

"I came out here from the East," I answered; "I have no home here."

"I guess you ain't been doing just right, or else you wouldn't be ashamed to tell," she said, while a graver look came into her sober eyes.

The situation was so keenly delightful that I lacked the moral strength to do aught but prolong it.

"Ah, madam, if you but knew!" I said, and

I fear that my tone conveyed to her a tacit confession of deep depravity.

We had reached the required number in La Salle Street. I led the way to the elevator, and found the door of the lawyer's office. The woman stood for a few moments in the passage; I was evidently on her conscience.

"Haven't you got any family or friends?" she continued, in a voice tender with sympathy.

"I had both," I replied.

"Then, young man, you take my advice, and just go back to your family, and tell them you're sorry that you done wrong, and you mean to do better. They'll be good to you and help you." Her words were swift with the energy of conviction.

"I am sure that you are right," I agreed.

And now a well-filled open purse was in her hand, and I saw her fingers hesitating among some loose coins. Presently she held out a quarter.

"You've been real nice to me," she said, "and I want to ask you not to make a wrong use of this money. You'll not buy liquor with it, will you?"

"Indeed I will not," I assured her. "I have little temptation to do that, for I can quench my thirst for nothing; it is food that I find it hard to get. And, madam," I continued, "I am deeply grateful to you for your good advice."

She smiled upon me, her pretty mouth and dimpled cheeks and dark blue eyes all playing their part in the friendly salutation.

"You will go back to your friends, won't you?" she said, persuasively.

"I will indeed," I replied. "Already I look forward to that with keenest pleasure."

Then richer by a quarter and all aglow with the sense of human sympathy I returned to the streets, and to the exhausting, dreary round of place-hunting.

That this in itself should be such hard work is largely due, I fancy, to the double strain, both on your strength and on your sensibilities. Certainly it is strangely enervating. Even when you are not weakened by the want of food, you find yourself at the far end of a fruitless search worn out beyond the exhaustion of a hard day's work. And then the actual ground covered by your most persistent effort is always so sadly disappointing. You may begin the day's hunt rested and fed and full of energy and resolve; you may have planned the search with care, taking pains to find out the various forms of unskilled labor which are employed within the chosen area; with utmost regard to systematic, time-saving expenditure of energy, you may go carefully over the ground, leaving no stone unturned; and yet, at the day's end, you have not covered half the area of your careful plan, and your whole body aches with weariness, and your heart is heavy and sore within you. Nor does the task grow easier with long practice. You acquire a certain facility in search; you come, by practical acquaintance, to some knowledge of the ins and outs of the labor market; but you must begin each day's quest with a greater draft upon your courage and resolution. For the actual barriers grow greater, as the outward marks of your mode of life become clearer upon you, and you feel yourself borne upon a tide that you cannot stem, out from the haven of a man's work, where you would be, to the barren wastes, where drift to certain wreck the lives of the destitute idle who have lost all hold upon a "sure intent."

All the days of this vagrant living were not equally hard. Some were harder than others. Saturday was a case in point. After an early frugal breakfast, for which Clark paid his last penny, we separated with an agreement to meet again at six o'clock in the evening in the reading-room of the Young Men's Christian Association. We were bent on different quests. Clark was determined to find work at his trade if he could, and I had no choice apart from unskilled labor.

For odd jobs we were each to have out an eye, and our acquaintance thus far with such a course made us fairly confident of at least the means of bare subsistence.

But nothing is less predictable than the outcome of this fortuitous living. The days vary with the variability which belongs to existence. Things "come your way" at times, and then again they have another destination which your widest and closest search fails to reveal.

It was hard, but it was not impossible through that Saturday morning to keep one's purpose fairly firm. From the ebb of the city's traffic in the darkness before the dawn I felt it flowing to its full tide. However destitute a man may be he cannot fail to share the quickening to waking life of a great city. The mystery of deepest night enfolds the place, and from out its veiling darkness the vague conformations of streets and buildings gradually emerge to the sharp outlines of the day's reality. An occasional delivery wagon from the market, or a milkman's cart goes rattling down a street, awaking echoes as of a deserted town, or a heavy truck laden with great rolls of white paper for the printing-press passes slowly, drawn by gigantic horses whose flat, hairy hoofs patiently pound the cobbles in their plodding pace, while whiffs of white vapor puff from their nostrils with their deep, regular breathing. The driver's oath can be heard a square away.

Standing at the curb along an open space in front of a public building are a few "night hawks." The horses are heavily blanketed and their noses buried in eating-bags. The cabmen have drawn together in social community on the pavement, where, as they gossip in the cold, they alternately stamp the flagging with their feet and clasp themselves in hard, sweeping embraces of the arms to stir the sluggish blood to swifter movement. An empty cable-car goes tearing round a "loop" with noise to awake the dead, and sets off again to some outermost portion of the town with a sleepy policeman on board and a newsboy, his bundle, damp from the press, upon his lap, who is bent on being first with news to that suburban region. The cars fill first with workingmen who are bound for distant factories and workshops and their posts along the lines of railways.

The streets are echoing now to the sounds of increasing traffic and to the steps of the vanguard of workers. These are the wage-earners, men for the most part, but there are women, too, and children. Here is humanity in the raw, hard-handed and roughly wrought for the Atlasian task of sustaining, by sheer physical strength and manual skill, the towering, delicate, intricate structure of progressive civilization.

The first of the salaried workers follow these, and youth swarms upon the streets moving with swift steps to the great co-educational schools of practical business. There are countless "cash" children in the throng, and office boys, and saleswomen and men, and clerks, and secretaries, and fledgling lawyers. There are marks of poverty on the faces and in the garments of the children, but most of the older ones are dressed in all the warmth and comfort of the well-to-do, while the young women who form so large a portion of the crowd step briskly in dainty boots carrying themselves with figures erect and graceful, clothed with the style and *chic* which are theirs as a national trait. Many of the men are, in contrast, markedly careless and unkempt.

All these are at work by eight o'clock, the wage-earners having been at it an hour already. Then come, mingling in the miscellaneous concourse of business streets which have taken on the full day's complexity, the superintendents and managers, and the heads of business houses and of legal firms, and bankers, and brokers, and all the company of rare men, whose native gifts of creative power or organizing capacity or executive ability, joined to great energy and resolution, have placed them in command of their co-workers, and made them responsible, as only the few can be responsible, for the lives and well-being of their fellows.

I recognize an eminent lawyer in the moving crowd, who, in democratic fashion, is walking to his office. He is a nobleman by every gift of nature, and his sensitive, expressive face, responsive to the grace of passing thought, is an unconscious appeal to my flagging courage, and to that, perhaps, of many another man in the pressing throng.

I see in a jolting omnibus a noted merchant, his head bowed over a morning paper as he rides to his business house. He holds a foremost place in business, yet it is fully equalled by his standing as a Christian gentleman and as a wise and most efficient philanthropist.

Almost touching elbows we pass each other on the street, a fellow-alumnus of my college and I, he an inheritor of great wealth and of a vast enterprise far-reaching in its scope to distant portions of the earth. And yet, so unmarred has he remained under the lavish gifts of fortune that his is already the dominant genius in the administration of immense productive power, and his influence is increasingly felt as a helpful and guiding force in great educational institutions of the land.

But this resurgence of the city's life, while it quickens the pulses for the time, is not an inspiration to last one through a day of disappointing search. By noon I had been turned many times away, and a sharp refusal to a polite request to be given a chance to work cuts deeper than men know who have never felt its wound. You try to ignore it at the first, and you bring greater energy to bear upon the hunt, but your wounds are there; and, in each succeeding advance, it is a sterner self-compulsion that forces you to lay bare again the shrinking quick of your quivering sensibilities. How often have I loitered about a door, passing and repassing it again and yet again before I could summon courage for the ordeal of a simple request for work!

Early in my experience I learned never to ask after a possible vacancy. Employers have no vacancies to be filled by such an inquirer. I simply said that I was looking for a job, and should be glad of any work that I could do; and that, if I could be given a chance to work, I would do my best to earn a place.

This request in practically the same terms produced often the most opposite effects. One man would answer with a kindliness so genuine and a regret so evidently sincere that it was with an utmost effort at times that I could control myself

And but a few minutes later another man might answer, if not with oaths and threats of violence, yet with a cynical sharpness which would leave a sorer rankling.

Despondency had almost conquered hope at last, and well-nigh worn one's courage out, and all but brought your drooping spirits to the brink of that abyss, where men think that they can give the struggle up. It is marvellous how the external aspect of all things changes to you here. The very stones beneath your feet are the hard paving of your prison-house; the threatening winter sky above you is the vaulted ceiling of your dungeon; the buildings towering to nearly twenty stories about you are your prison walls, and, as by a keen refinement of cruelty, they swarm with hiving industry, as if to mock you in your bitter plight.

Suddenly there dawns upon you an undreamed-of significance in the machinery of social restraint. The policeman on the crossing in his slouching uniform bespattered with the oozing slime of the miry streets where he controls the streams of traffic, even as the Fellaheen direct the water of the Nile through the net-work of their irrigation ditches, is the outstretched hand of the law ready to lay hold on you, should you violate in your despair the rules of social order. Behind him you see the patrol wagon and the station-house and the courts of law and the State's prison and enforced labor, the whole elaborate process by means of which society would reassimilate you, an excrement, a non-social being as a transgressor of the law, into the body politic once more, and set you to fulfilling a functional activity as a part of the social organism.

This result, with the means of living which it implies and the link that it gives you to your kind, even if it be the relation of a criminal to society, may become the object of a desire so strong that the shame and punishment involved may lose their deterring force for you.

There are simple means of setting all this process in motion in your behalf. Men break shop-windows in full view of the police, or voluntarily hold out to them hands weighted with the spoils of theft.

Perhaps it is in the moving crowds upon the pavements that one, in such a mood, feels most of all this change in external aspect. The loneliness, the sense of being a thing apart in the presence of your working kind, a thing unvitalized by real contact with the streams of life, is the seat of your worst suffering, and the pain is augmented by what seems an actual antagonism to you as to something beyond the range of human sympathy.

By the middle of that Saturday afternoon I had fairly given up the search for work, and I found myself on State Street, wandering aimlessly in the hope of an odd job. Hunger and utter weariness were playing their part, as well as the loneliness and the sense of imprisonment. One had the feeling that, if he could but sit down somewhere and rest, all other troubles would vanish for the time at least. And there were, I knew, many public rooms to which I could go in unquestioned right or privilege, but once within their warmth, I was well aware that to keep awake would tax all my power of will, and that, as a sleeping lounger, I should soon be turned adrift again.

The street was coated with a murky mire, kneaded by hoofs and wheels to the consistency of paste, and tracked by countless feet upon the pavements, where it lay as thick almost as on the cobbles. The skyline on both sides was a ragged *sierra*, mounting from three to five and seven stories, then leaping suddenly on the right to the appalling height of the Masonic Temple, and grotesque in all its length with rearing signs and flagstaffs that pierced the smoky vapor of the upper air, while the sagging halyards fluttered like fine threads in the icy gusts from off the lake. Whole fronts of flamboyant architecture were almost concealed behind huge bombastic signs, while other advertising devices hung suspended overhead, watches three feet in diameter, and boots and hats of a giant race.

The shop windows were draped with the scalloped fringes of idle awnings, and merely a glance at their displays was enough to disclose a commercial difference separated by only the width of the thoroughfare, a difference like that between Twenty-third Street and the Bowery.

From Polk Street and State I drifted northward to the river. No longer was there any stimulus in contact with the intermingling crowds. All that was hard and sordid in one's lot seemed to have blinded one to all but the hard and sordid in the world about. Beneath its structural veiling you could not see the warm heart of life, tender and strong and true. Multitudes of human faces passed you, deeply marked with the lines of baser care. Human eyes looked out of them full of the unconscious tragic pathos of the blind, blind to all vision but the light of common day; eyes of the money grubbers, sharpened to a needle's point yet incapable of deeper insight than the prospect of gain; eyes of the haunted poor, furtive in the fear of things, and seeing only the incalculable, threatening hand of fateful poverty; eyes of ragged children who were selling papers on the streets, their eyes old with the age of the ages, as though there gazed through them the unnumbered generations of the poor who have endured "long labor unto aged breath;" eyes of the rich, hardened by a subtler misery in the artificial lives they lead in sternest bondage to powers in whom all faith is gone, but whom they serve in utter fear, scourged by convention to the acting of an unmeaning part in life, seeking above all things escape from self in the fantastic *stimuli* of fashion, yet feeling ever, in the dark, the remorseless closing in of the contracting prison-walls of self-indulgence narrowing daily the scope of self, and threatening life with its grimmest tragedy, in the hopeless, faithless, purposeless *ennui* of existence.

And now there passed me in the street two sisters of charity walking side by side. Their sweet, placid faces, framed in white, reflected the limpid purity of unselfish useful living, and their eyes, deep-seeing into human misery and evil, were yet serene in the all-conquering strength of goodness.

It was in some saner thought inspired by this vision that I walked on across the river to the comparative quiet of the North Side. I needed all the sanity that I could summon. The setting sun had broken for a moment through snow-laden clouds, and it shone in blazing shafts of blood-red light through the hazy lengths of westward streets. Its rays fell warmly upon a wide, deep window as I passed, and the rich reflection caught my eye. For some time I stood still, a prey to conflicting feelings. Just within the window with the shades undrawn, sat a friend in lounging ease before an open fire, absorbed in his evening paper. There flashed before me the scene of our last encounter. We stood at parting on a wharf in the balmy warmth of late winter in the far South. Behind my friend was the brilliant carpeting of open lawns and blooming beds of flowers, and beyond lay the deep olive green of forests of live-oak with palmettos growing in dense underbrush, and the white "shell road" gleaming in the varied play of lights and shadows until it lost itself, in its course to the beach, in the deepening gloom of overdrooping boughs weighted with hanging moss in an effect of tropical luxuriance. And from out that vivid mental picture there came again, almost articulate in its reality, the graceful urging of my friend that I should visit him in his Western home.

It was so short a step by which I could emerge from the submerged, and the temptation to take it was so strong and inviting. The want and hardship and hideous squalor were bad enough, but these things could be endured for the sake of the end in view. It was the longing for fellowship that had grown to almost overmastering desire, the sight of a familiar face, the sound of a familiar voice, the healing touch of cultivated speech to feelings all raw under the brutalities of the street vernacular.

And after all, what real purpose was my experiment to serve? I had set out to learn and in the hope of gaining from what I learned something worth the while of a careful investigation. I had discovered much that was new to me, but nothing that was new to science, and the experience of a single individual could never furnish data for a valid generalization, and all that I had learned or could learn was already set forth in tabulated, statistical accuracy in blue books and economic treatises. Moreover it was impossible for me to rightly interpret even the human conditions in which I found myself, for between me and the actual workers was the infinite difference of necessity in relation to any lot in which I was. How could I, who at any moment could change my status if I chose, enter really into the life and feelings of the destitute poor who are bound to their lot by the hardest facts of stern reality? It was all futile and inadequate and absurd. I had learned something, and as for further inquiry of this kind, I would better give it up, and return to a life that was normal to me.

The sense of futility was strong upon me. Never before had the temptation to abandon the attempt assailed me with such force. It was no clean-cut, definite resolution that won in favor of continued effort. Not at all. I think that when I turned away I was more than half-resolved to give over the experiment. But even as a man, who, contemplating suicide, allows himself to be borne upon the aimless stream of common events past the point of many an early resolution to the deed, so I found myself gradually awaking to the thought, "Ah, well, I will try it a little longer."

It was in this mood that I went to find Clark at our rendezvous. Our eyes met in quick inquiry, and before either of us spoke, we knew each the other's story. But Clark wished the confirmation of actual confession.

"Ain't you had no luck too?" he whispered, his eyes close to mine, and contracting with a sense of the incredibility of such a result, which might be altered, if one would only insist strongly enough upon its being other than it actually was.

"No," I said, "I've had no luck, nor anything to eat since morning." We were speaking in the low tones which were permitted in the reading-room.

"Well, I'll be ——." And Clark's drawling oath seemed exactly suited to the absurdity of the situation. We both laughed softly over our coincident dilemma, and by a mutual impulse we walked out into the street, where we spent an agreeable half-hour in discussing the placards in the windows of two restaurants.

There was an especial attraction for us in the lower window where there stood a *chef* all white from his spotless cap to where his white garments were lost to view behind a gas-stove of ingenious contrivance, on whose clean, polished upper surface he was turning well-browned griddle-cakes. I do not know what the association was, and it was in entire good-humor that Clark suddenly turned to me with the remark:

"Say, partner, we'd get all we want to eat, if we'd heave a rock through this window."

CHAPTER III

FINDING STEADY WORK

No. — Blue Island Avenue, Chicago, Ill.,
December 22, 1891.

That night when Clark and I reached the head of the staircase which descends to the basement of the station-house we found the way blocked by men. We thought at first that a prisoner was being booked, but a second glance revealed the fact that the door of iron grating was wide open. With his back against it stood an officer. The lodgers were passing him in slow order, and, as they filed by, the policeman held each in sharp examination for a moment. Soon I could see him clearly. He stood, obstructing the exit from the stairs, a straight, massive figure well on to two hundred and fifty pounds. A side-view was toward us, and I took delight in the clean-shaven face with the well-chiselled Grecian profile, the eye deep-set and widening to the upward lift of the lashes, and the dark, abundant hair rising in short, crisp curls from under the pressure of his cap-rim.

He was putting the men through a catechism respecting their nationalities, their homes and occupations, and their motives in coming to Chicago. Beside him stood two men, the elder a man past middle life, of sober, dignified appearance, and with an air of philosophical interest in what he saw. The younger was a callow youth, just grown to manhood, and he may have been the other's son. They were out "slumming," evidently, and the officer had been detailed as their guide. Their purpose may have been a good one, but the boy's face, as I watched it, seemed to me to show plainly the marks of an unwholesome curiosity. And certainly as they stood there in well-dressed, well-fed comfort, eying at leisure, as though it were exhibited for their diversion, this company of homeless, ragged, needful men, there was to my mind a deliberate insult in the attitude sharper than the sting of a blow in the face. I thought at first that I might be alone in feeling this, until I heard a man behind me say, as the cause of the delay became clear to him:

"Who is them jays, and what business have they inspectin' us?"

On the step below me was as good a vagrant type as the slowly moving line on the staircase disclosed. I could not see his face, but I could guess at its effect from the dark, bristling, unkempt beard that sprouted in tangled, wiry masses from his cheeks and throat, and the heavy, cohering hair that lay long and thick about his ears and on his neck. There was an unnatural corpulence about the figure, the reality of which was belied by the lean, sharp lines that appeared beneath a bulging collar and in the emaciated arms that were red, and raw, and almost bare below the elbows, where the ragged sleeves hung in fraying ribbons.

The obesity was purely artificial. The tramp had on three flannel shirts, at least, besides several heavy waistcoats and two pairs of trousers and as many coats, with a possibility of there being three. The outer garments were quaint mosaics of patches, positively ingenious in their interlacing adherence to one another and in their rude preservation of original outlines of dress. From him came the pungent reek of bad whiskey and stale tobacco.

It was as though the man stood clothed in outward and visible signs of unseen realities, enveloped in the rigid habit of his own wrong-doing, draped in the mystery of inherited tendencies, and cloaked in the stern facts of a hard environment. And yet, as beneath the filthy outer covering there was a human being, so under these veil-

HE WAS PUTTING THE MEN THROUGH A CATECHISM RESPECTING THEIR NATIONALITIES, THEIR HOMES AND OCCUPATIONS, AND THEIR MOTIVES IN COMING TO CHICAGO.

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ing, unseen vestures was a man, a living soul created by the Almighty.

I could hear him muttering gruffly to himself as he slowly descended to his turn at the foot of the steps.

"Well, Weary, where are you from? A hobo from Hoboville, I guess," and the officer's voice rang strong and clear up the staircase to the dim landing, where stood the waiting line of men.

The two slummers laughed aloud.

"From Maine," said the tramp. The voice came hoarse and thin and broken-winded from a throat eaten out by disease.

"Well, you're a rare one, if you're a Yankee. But what brought you to Chicago?"

"Lookin' for work at the World's Fair."

"You lie, you lazy loafer. The last thing you're looking for is work. You all tell that World's Fair lie. There's been as many of you in Chicago every winter for the last ten years as there is this winter."

The man was stung.

"I've as good a right here as you," he said.

"You have, have you!" cried the officer in quick rejoinder, but with no loss of temper. "Look at me, you filthy hobo," he added, drawing himself to his full, imposing height. "I'm a police officer. I've held my job for eleven years, and got my promotions. I'm earning eighty dollars a month, do you see? Now go down there where you belong," and he pointed imperiously to the far end of the corridor.

My turn came next.

"Here's another whiskers," announced the officer in explanation to his charges; "same kind, only younger and newer to the business." And then to me, "Where are you from?" he said.

I replied with some inanity in mock German.

"Oh, he's a Dutchman. We get a few of them. But they're mostly older men, and kind of moody, and they tramp alone a good bit. Can't you talk English?"

I said something in very bad French.

"Oh, I guess he's a Frenchy. That's very uncommon——"

I interrupted his information with a line from Virgil, spoken with an inflection of inquiry.

"He may be a Dago, or a—ah——" he hesitated.

I broke in with a sentence in Greek.

"Or a Russian," concluded the officer.

I thought that I could mystify him finally, and so I pronounced a verse from Genesis in Hebrew. But he was equal to the emergence.

"I've got it," he exclaimed, with a note of exultation; "he's a Sheeny!" And free to go I walked down the corridor, feeling that I had come rather badly out of that encounter.

None of us, I think, resented much the action of the officer. The policemen understand us perfectly, and in a certain broad, human sense we know them for our friends. I have been much impressed with this quality of natural *bonhomie* in the relation of the police officers to the vagrant and criminal classes. It seems to be the outcome of sturdy common sense and genuine knowledge and human sympathy. It would be difficult, I fancy, seriously to deceive an average officer of good experience. He may not know his man personally in every case, but he knows his type, and he takes his measure with admirable accuracy. He is not far misled by either his virtue or his vice. He knows him for a human being, even if he be a vagrant or a criminal, and he has come by practical experience to a fair acquaintance with human limitations in these spheres of life.

The sympathy of which I have spoken is conspicuously innocent of sentimentality. It comes from a saner source, and is of a hardier fibre. Unfortunately it lays open a way of corruption to corrupt men on the force, but it is the basis, too, of high practical efficiency in the difficult task of locating crime and keeping it within control. And it has another value little suspected, perhaps. I have met more than one workingman at work who owed his job to the friendly aid of a policeman, who had singled him out from the ranks of the unemployed as being worthy of his help. And this sort of timely succor is bounded, I judge, only by the limits of opportunity. Certainly I shall never forget the kindness of an officer who had evidently grown familiar with me on the streets, and who to my great surprise stopped me suddenly one day with the question:

"Ain't yous got a job yet?"

"No," I said, as I stood looking up in deep admiration of his height and breadth and ruddy, wholesome face and generous Irish brogue.

"Well, that is hard luck," he went on. "There isn't many jobs ever at this season of the year, but just yous come around this way now and again, and I'll tell yous, if I hears of anything."

That was only a day or two before I found work, and when I had a chance to tell him of my success, his pleasure seemed as genuine as my own.

. . . .

Sunday morning was all that Clark and I could wish. To the pallor of the earliest dawn was added a soft, white muffling of snow. It lay almost untracked over the filthy streets and upon the pavements, and in dainty cones it capped the fence-palings, and roofed in pure white the sheds and flat-cars in the railway-station yard.

Clark and I walked rapidly across Wabash Avenue, then south to Twentieth Street, and then east again across Michigan and Indiana to Prairie Avenue. Here we were in the midst of a wealthy residence quarter. Most hopefully we wandered about in anxious waiting for some signs of life. From the first house at which we could apply we were turned away with the assurance that there was a man on the place whose duties included the cleaning of the pavements, and that, therefore, our services were not needed. We had expected this to be the case in the majority of instances; it was of the possible exception that we were in search. Soon we began to fear that there were no exceptions. Our spirits had fallen low under repeated refusals, when suddenly they rose with a bound, when we finally got a pavement to clean, and twenty-five cents each in payment.

The temptation to quit at once and get something to eat was strong, for the swallow of coffee and piece of bread at the station-house had not gone far toward satisfying an appetite which was of twenty-four hours' growth. But then in another hour or two all further chance of work like this would be gone, and so we stuck at it. Our reward was almost instant.

Not only were we given a job at sweeping snow, and paid another quarter each for it, but we were asked whether we had breakfasted, and were invited to a meal in the kitchen. I think that the cook thoroughly enjoyed feeding us, we did such ample justice to her fare. After two large bowls of steaming porridge, we began on omelettes and beefsteak and crisp potatoes and fresh bread, drinking the while great quantities of coffee, not the flat, bitter, diluted wash of the cheap restaurants, but the hot, creamy, fragrant beverage which tones one for the day.

We had little time to talk, and very selfishly I left our end of the conversation wholly to Clark. The cook drew from him some of the facts of our position, and the further fact of our having been so long without food. This made her very indignant, not at us, but at the existing order of things.

"There should be a law," she said, emphatically, "a law to give a job to every decent man that's out of work." Then, with the sweet facility of feminine remedy, "And another law," she added, "to keep all them I-talians from comin' in and takin' the bread out of the mouths of honest people. They ain't no better than heathens

I THINK THAT THE COOK THOROUGHLY ENJOYED FEEDING US.

anyway, and they do tell me that they'll work for what a Christian dog wouldn't live on. Why, there's me own cousin as come over from County Down a month ago last Tuesday, and he ain't got a job yet, and I be obliged to support him, and all on account of them unclean I-talians."

There seemed to be no end to our good luck that morning. After a right royal breakfast we got still another belated pavement to clean, and when we had finished that our joint earnings made the sumptuous total of one dollar and fifty cents, and we were not hungry.

It was a delightful walk back to the familiar lodging-house, where we paid for a night's lodging in advance, and so secured immediate access to the washing and cleaning facilities of the establishment.

When we set forth again Clark looked fairly trim. His clothes were well brushed and his boots were clean. He had been shaven, and his face glowed with healthful exercise and the effects of nourishing, sustaining food. We had been in conversation on the subject of going to church. Clark opposed it warmly; besides, he had another plan. There were certain foremen whom he was bent on seeing in the unoccupied quiet of Sunday, in relation to the matter of a possible job.

"And I don't take no stock in church, anyway," he explained. "Fellows like us ain't expected there, and we ain't wanted. If you ain't dressed in the style, you're different from everybody else that's there, and there ain't no fun in that. And if you do go, what do you hear? Sometimes a preacher talks sense, and makes things reasonable to you, but most of them talks rot, that you don't believe nor they either. I'd sooner read Tom Paine than hear all the preachers in this town. He talks to you straight, in a way you can understand."

I pleaded my knowledge of a preacher who would talk to us as "straight" as Tom Paine, but to no purpose, for there remained the question of dress. Then I urged our going to mass, where we should not be embarrassed by our singularity; but this plea met with no favor at all, and I was obliged to go alone to church, and did not see Clark again until we met late in the evening at the lodging-house.

It was snowing fast at the end of the service-hour, giving high promise of abundant work in the morning. On the strength of it I ate a fifteen-cent dinner with a twofold feeling of satisfaction. Then I began a diligent search for the place of meeting of the Socialists. Sunday afternoon, I had learned, was their time of meeting. A knowledge of the place was wanting, but only because it had not occurred to me to look for an announcement of it in the newspapers of the day before. And this was wholly indicative of my general frame of mind in the connection. My preconceptions were strong. I had vision of a bare, dimly lighted room in the far recess of an unfrequented building, a room reached by dusty stairs and long, dark corridors, closely guarded by sentries, whose duty was to demand the countersign from those who entered and to give warning of danger in an emergency, so that the inmates might escape by secret passages to the street.

I had made frequent inquiries of the men whom I met, and it was from one of these that I learned that the time was Sunday afternoon; but none of them knew the place nor seemed to take the smallest interest in the matter. I thought that a policeman might be able to put me on the track of the meeting, if he chose, but then I feared that there were even chances that he would "run me in" as a revolutionary, upon hearing my request. I concluded that if I should be so fortunate as to find the place, it would be by some happy chance; and that if I gained admission, it would be by a happier one, due largely to my rough appearance.

I pictured this rude hall thronged with men, grizzled, bearded men, with eyes aflame and hair dishevelled, listening in high excitement to leaders whose inflammatory speeches lashed them into fury against all established order. Curiosity kindled to liveliest interest under the free play of imagination. In my eagerness I grew bolder. Repeatedly I stopped workingmen upon the street, and asked to be directed. No one knew, until I chanced upon a man who had a vague suspicion that the Socialists met in a hall over a saloon somewhere in West Lake Street.

I crossed the river and passed under the dark-steel framework of the elevated railway. The snow was falling through the still, sooty air in heavy flakes, which clung to every exposed surface, and turned the street-slime into a dark, granular slush. It seemed to be a region of warehouses and cheap shops, but chiefly of saloons; scarcely a soul was to be seen on the pavements; and brooding over the long, deserted street was the decorous quiet of Sunday.

I quickened my pace to overtake three men in front of me. Before I caught up with them they disappeared through a door which opened on the pavement. It was that of a saloon. The shades were drawn, and the place, like all the others of its kind, had every appearance of being closed for the day. I tried the door, and, finding it unlocked, followed the men inside. They had already mingled in a group of workingmen who sat about a large stove in the far corner of the bar-room, drinking beer and talking quietly.

They did not notice me until the one of whom I inquired appealed to the others for some knowledge of the question. Then there was a moment of passing the inquiry from one to another, until a good-looking young workman spoke up.

"Why, I know," he said; "I've just come from there. It's over in Waverley Hall, corner of Lake and Clark."

"Will you help me to get into the meeting?" I asked. "I am a stranger here, and I should very much like to go."

"There ain't no trouble," he responded; "you just go up two flights of steps from the street, and walk right in."

It was even as he said. At the level of the first landing was a restaurant, with a strikingly fine portrait of Burns near the entrance. My curiosity was at a high pitch when I reached the second landing. It was ill-lighted, and it opened first into an almost dark store-room, in whose deep recesses were great stacks of chairs. But a single step to the right brought one to the wide-open door of Waverley Hall and a company of Socialists in full session. A man sat beside the door with a small table before him, on which in neat array were some attractive paper editions for sale. My eye fell in passing upon "The Fabian Essays," and Thorold Rogers's "Six Centuries of Work and Wages," and an English version of Schäffle's "Quintessence of Socialism."

"May I go in?" I asked of the man.

"Oh, certainly," he replied. "Walk right in, and take any vacant seat you choose."

I thanked him, and walked up a central aisle with rows of seats on either side, where sat from two or three hundred men and a few women. By the time that I had found a seat half way to the dais, at the far end of the hall, where sat the chairman of the meeting, I was already deeply interested in the speech of a man who stood facing the company from the side, with his back against the wall. Slender and of medium height, with sandy hair slightly touched with gray, with an expression of ready alertness on his intelligent face, he was speaking fluently in good, well articulated English, and with deep conviction his evident inspiration.

"What we want is education," he was saying; "an education which will enlighten the capitalistic class as well as our own. We serve no useful end in denouncing the capitalists. They, like us, are simply a product of the competitive system, and individually many of them are good and generous men. But we shall be furthering the cause of Socialism in trying to show them their share of the evils under which we all live. How that, for example, owing to the present organization of society, in spite of all the safeguards which entrench private property, not even a capitalist can feel assured that his children or grandchildren may not be beggars upon the streets."

Such views, it seemed to me, at least suggested some catholicity of mind in "the Peddler," as the speaker afterward declared himself to be. When he took his seat several men were on their feet at once, appealing to the chair, and I saw that the meeting was well in hand, for the chairman instantly singled out one for the privilege of the floor, addressing him politely by name, prefixing, however, the title "Comrade," much as "Citizen" was used in the French Revolution and after.

The well-grown muscular, intelligent workingman was the dominant type among them, but the general average in point of respectability was so high that it gave to the company rather the appearance of a gathering of the *bourgeoisie* than of proletarians. Had the proportion between men and women been reversed, without change of average status, I might have been in a prayer-meeting. But the prayer-meeting in sustaining the resemblance would have been one of marked vitality.

Speeches were following one another in quick succession. Some were good and some were vapid; some were in broken English, and others were in English more than broken; but all were surcharged with the kind of earnestness which captivates attention. Irresistibly at times one was reminded of the propaganda of a new faith. Much was said the meaning of which I could not catch, but the spirit of it all was not far to seek. Here there was no cant; there was room for none. These men believed that they had hold of a truth which is regenerating society. In the face of a world deep-rooted in an individualistic organization of industry and of social order, they preached a gospel of collectivism, with unbounded belief in its ultimate triumph.

At times there was a malignant animus in what they said, when argument was enforced from sources of personal experience; for men would speak with the intensity of feeling of those who know what hunger is and what it is to hear their children cry for bread, while within their sight is the wasteful luxury of the rich. But a certain earnest moderateness of speech was far more common, and it sometimes revealed a breadth of view and an acquaintance with economics which to me were astonishing.

Yet, after all, it was the personal note that they touched most effectively in what they said. Strong, sturdy men, with every mark upon them of workmanlike efficiency, spoke feelingly of the relation, which they said, was growing up between what they called "the two great classes of society," the employing and the employed. They declared the wage-earner essentially a "wage-slave" under present conditions, and they contrasted his lot unfavorably with that of an actual bondsman. The chattel-slave, they said, his master buys outright, and having made him thus a part of his invested capital, he shields him, out of a purely selfish motive, it is true, yet shields him, from bodily harm. But not the body of an industrial slave, merely his capacity for work, his employer buys, and he may drive him to the exhaustion of his last power of endurance, knowing perfectly well that, should he wreck him physically, the labor-market would instantly supply a hundred men eager to take the vacant place on the same terms. And it is little relief to the feelings of the wage-slave, they added, to be assured that he is not sold, but is free to sell his labor in the open market, when he recalls the hard necessity that conditions that freedom. It was interesting to find them paraphrasing, as Old Pete had done in the logging camp, the dictum of Carlyle—

"Liberty, I am told, is a divine thing. Liberty, when it becomes the liberty to die by starvation, is not so divine."

Then, as an expression of the belief of the gathering, a member introduced a resolution which pronounced it to be a truth in the relation of the individual to society, that "in case a man, acting upon the theory that society owes him a living, should refuse to work, and should steal, *he* would be a criminal, and ought to be deprived of his personal liberty and be forced to work. But in case a man, acting upon the theory that society owes him a chance to earn a living, should find no opportunity, and should, therefore, be forced to steal, *society* would be the criminal, and ought to furnish the remedy."

The resolution was passed unanimously and with much show of approval. But I was more interested in its introducer. He was a curious departure from the prevailing type; short and straight and slender, with a small, thin face whose skin was like old, exquisite, wrinkled parchment. His bright eyes, set close together, moved ceaselessly as though sensitive to a certain mental restlessness; a thin aquiline nose curved delicately in the nostrils above a gray mustache which half concealed a thin-lipped mouth of uncertain drawing. Over all was a really fine, dome-like brow, quite bald and polished, while from the sides and back of his head there grew a mass of iron-gray hair which fell curling to his shoulders. I shall take the liberty of calling him "the Poet." There was a nervous grace in his movements, and a thorough self-possession in his manner, and a quality of cultivation and refinement in his voice and speech, which were clearly indicative of breeding and education and of native talent. Yet his position among the Socialists seemed not at all that of a distinctive leader; he was simply one of the company, on terms of perfect equality, and he addressed the others and was himself addressed with the fraternal "Comrade" in all the intimacy of primitive Christianity. It was with instant anticipation of the pleasure of it that I learned from the announcements that the Poet would read, in an early meeting, a paper on the burning question of the opening of the World's Fair on Sundays.

A woman sat near the front. I had seen her in frequent whispered consultation with the chairman, whom I shall call "the Leader," and with the Poet and the Peddler and other members who sat about her, and I judged that she was high in the councils of the Socialists, and I shall name her "the Citizeness."

In the midst of the applause which marked the passage of the resolution, she was on her feet—a dark, portly woman of middle age, dressed very simply in black, bearing herself with an air of accustomedness which showed that she was by no means a novice on the floor, and speaking, when quiet was restored, with a directness and an unaffected ease which had in them no loss of femininity. But you had only to watch closely in order to see nature avenge herself in a certain self-assertation which the Citizeness felt forced at times to assume, for the sake of emphasis, and in a certain very feminine straining after the sarcastic.

She held a newspaper in her hand, and from it, she said, she wished to read a fragment of a speech made by Mr. —— to a large gathering of his subordinates in the administration of a railway system of which he is the president.

It was a short paragraph, in the characteristic, oratorical English of that genial railway president when he becomes serious, and its purport was simply a charge to those who bear to workingmen the relation of authoritative direction to treat them with the utmost consideration.

IN THE MIDST OF THE APPLAUSE WHICH MARKED THE PASSAGE OF THE RESOLUTION, SHE WAS ON HER FEET.

"These are anxious times," he said, substantially, "and there are grave indications which go to show that workingmen are increasingly regarding themselves as a class apart and their interests as being antagonized by those of their employers. All employers and directors of labor in all personal contact with their men should, therefore, exercise the greatest care in their treatment of them, to the end that these men may not be made to feel unnecessarily what is distasteful to them in their condition of subordination."

"That," said the Citizeness, "is a significant sign of the times. I have rarely seen words which indicate more clearly the growing frame of mind of the capitalists. They are beginning to wake up to the fact of danger. Oh, yes, when it begins to be a question of self-preservation they show signs of some knowledge of the actual situation! But just see how foxy they are. Mr. —— does not tell his fellow-employers to treat their men well because they ought to, and he doesn't talk any foolishness about the interests of labor and capital being identical. He knows better than that. He knows perfectly well that the men in the employ of his corporation are wage-slaves. He knows it a good deal better than most of the men themselves know it. And what he is telling his fellow-capitalists, who are beginning to feel alarm over the situation, is this, that in all their treatment of their men they must make a point of disguising from them their real condition of servitude. Keep them in servitude, of course, but by all possible means keep them in ignorance of it, for the greatest danger to the existing order of things lies in an awakening of workingmen, and already there are signs of such an awakening, and 'the times' are, therefore, 'anxious.'"

Tumultuous applause followed this sally. It expressed the prevalent thought as no word of the afternoon had done. "Capital conspiring to maintain the existing bondage of labor—growing anxious at symptoms of dawning intelligence among its slaves, and disclosing, in a moment of unguarded anxiety, its real spirit through a feigned one!" "What clearer proof of the truth could be asked?" men seemed to say, as they looked eagerly into one another's faces, and kept on applauding.

Before the noise subsided the Peddler again had gained the floor. He harked back to his original theme of "education," and was showing its applicability to the situation from the new point of view.

"The greatest obstacle to Socialism," he exclaimed, with some vehemence, "is the brute ignorance among ourselves, the working-classes.

And the greatest bulwark of the cruel, crushing, competitive anarchy under which we suffer and die is this same ignorance of the workers. It is not organized capital that blocks the way of Socialism, for organized capital is unconsciously hastening the day when all capital will be organized under the common ownership of all the people. It is the dead weight of poor, blinded, befooled wage-slaves which hangs like an incubus about the neck of Socialism. It is through this that the truth must make its way, and will make its way, until workingmen at last awake to an acceptance of that which so long has been striving with them to get itself accepted.

"But alas! alas! how slow the process is! And through what density of ignorance and indifference and prejudice must the light shine!

"Sitting in the street-car beside me, as I rode down this afternoon, was a workingman whom I know well. I invited him to come to this meeting with me. I told him that we were going to talk about matters which concerned him deeply. And what did he say? Why, he laughed in my face, and said that he did not see much sense in talking about such things, and that he preferred putting in his Sunday afternoon at the 'mat-in-ee,' and having a good laugh. Poor, miserable wretch! working like a galley-slave through the week, and caring for nothing on his day of rest but an extra allowance of sleep, and then further forgetfulness of his daily lot in the crowds and the lights and the illusions and heart-breaking fun of the cheap theatres. All that remains for him then is to go home drunk, and get up the next morning to the twofold hell of his common life."

It was growing dark within the hall, and the meeting was quietly adjourned until the next Sunday. But the members were slow in leaving. They formed into small groups, and went on discussing earnestly the topics of the afternoon, as they stood among the benches, or moved slowly toward the door.

The street-lights were burning with flickering, dancing effect through the falling snow, and under them great crowds of working-people came streaming through the wide-open doors of the theatres, swarming upon the pavements and in the street-cars, well-dressed, and quiet in the preoccupation of pleasure-seekers homeward bound, and not a little impatient for early transportation.

I walked alone in the direction of the lodging-house. Deep is the spell of real conviction, and the thoughts of these working-people, all alive with belief, were passing warm and glowing through my mind. That there are multitudes of workers who are looking earnestly for a better social order, and who intelligently and firmly believe in its possibility, I had known, but never before had I felt the inspiration of actual contact with them.

And the fascination of their point of view! "A world full of want and misery and cruelty, by reason, most of all, of the wasteful war of competition between man and his brother man in the wilderness of anarchical production in which the people blindly wander; while over against them, awaiting their occupation, is a promised land of peace and plenty, where poverty and want, and their attendant miseries and tendencies to moral evil, will be unknown, if men can but be induced to cross the Jordan which separates lawless competition from intelligent and provident co-operation."

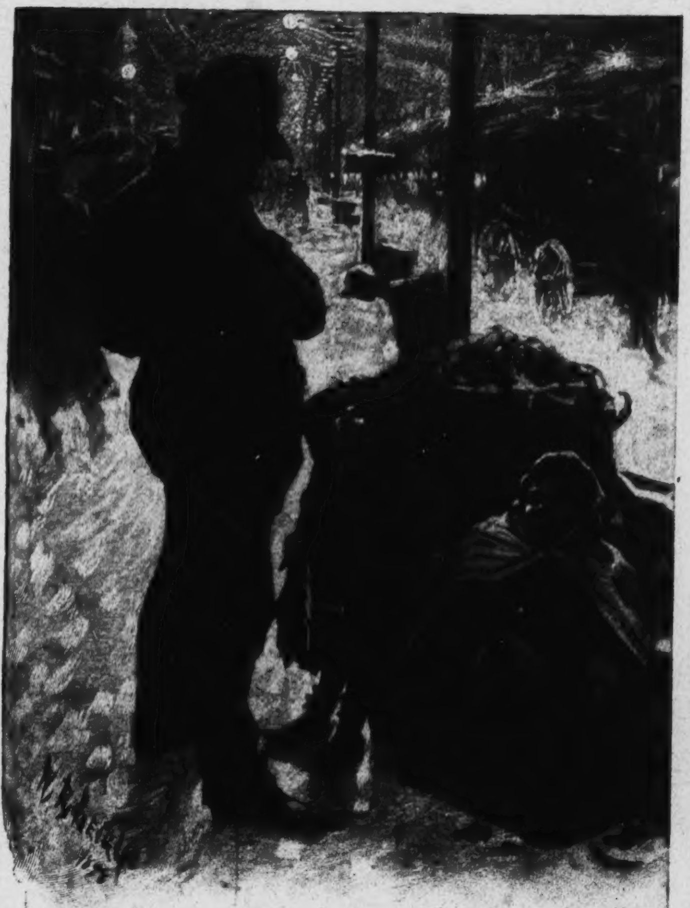
How quick and sure is such an appeal to the human heart! It is the world-old charm, charming men anew. A royal road at last, a wide gate and a broad way leading unto life! The way of salvation made easy! It is the Patriarchs again trusting to their sacrifices; the old Jews to circumcision and the blood of Abraham; the spiritually blinded Christians to their outward symbols; and all of them deaf to that truest word of all philosophy, "The kingdom of heaven is within you."

It is so easy to conceive of some change in outward conditions, some "remedy," some "solution" for the ills from which we suffer, and which, having been accepted, would lift life to a plane of harmonious and frictionless movement, and set us free henceforth to follow our own wills and purposes and desires. And it is so supremely difficult to realize that the way of life lies not that way at all, not in the pursuit of happiness nor in the fulfilment of our own wills, but in realizing that the universe is governed by laws of right and justice and truth, and in bringing our wills into subjection to those laws and our actions into harmony with them.

One of these laws, I take it, is the law "the universal brotherhood of man." And it is by the practical denial of this law in the dealing of men with their fellow-men that much of the world's cruelest misery has been caused, and much of the seed of terrible retribution has been sown.

It was their firm belief in the truth of brotherhood which gave to the words of the Socialists their greatest strength and charm. It was plainly fundamental to all their views. Ignorance and prejudice and unphilosophical thinking warped their expressed ideas and made their speeches very human, but yet in them all was this saving hold on truth, a living belief in the solidarity of the human race and in the responsibilities which grow out of the bond of universal kinship.

At the corner near my lodging-house I stood still for a few moments watching the deft movements of two young children who were busy near the curb. The long, wide street lay a field of glistening diamonds where the blue-white electric light was reflected from the snow. A drunken man reeled past me, tracking the untrodden snow at the sides of the beaten path along the centre of the pavement. A dim alley at my right lost itself in almost impenetrable darkness, on the verge of which a small wooden house appeared tottering to ruin and as though the weight of the falling snow were hastening its end. From out the alley came the figures of three young women who were laughing gayly as they crossed the street in company and walked on toward the post-office. The street was very still and lonely for that quarter, and the two little girls worked diligently, talking to each other, but oblivious apparently to everything but their task. I drew nearer to see what they were doing. A street-light shone strong and clear above them, and they were in the path of a broad stream of yellow glare that poured from the windows of a cheap chop-house. They were at work about a barrel which stood on the curb. I could see that it was full of the refuse of the eating-house. Scraps of meat and half-eaten fragments of bread and of vegetables lay mixed with bones and egg-shells and vegetable skins in a pulpy ooze, rising to the barrel rim and overflowing upon the pavement and in the gutter. An old wicker basket, with paper covering its ragged holes, rested between the children, and into this they dropped selected morsels of food. The larger girl was tall enough to see over the top of the barrel, and so she worked there, and I saw her little hands dive into the soft, glutinous mass after new treasures. The smaller one could only crouch upon the pavement and gather thence and from the gutter what edible fragments she could find. I watched them closely. The older child was dressed in thin, ragged cotton, black with filth, and her matted, stringy hair fell from her uncovered head about a lean, peaked face that was as dirty almost as her dress. She wore both shoes and stockings, but the shoes were far too large for her, and through their gaping holes the cold and wet entered freely. Her sister was more interesting to me. She was a child of four or five. The snow was falling upon her bare brown curls and upon the soft white flesh of her neck, and over the damp, clinging, threadbare dress, through which



"DON'T YOU TOUCH IT!" SHE SAID, FIERCELY.

I could trace the delicate outlines of an infant's figure. Her warm breath passed hissing through chattering teeth in the intervals between outbursts of a deep, hoarse cough which shook her frame. Through the streaking dirt upon her hands appeared in childish movement the dimples above the knuckles, and the dainty fingers, red and cold and washed clean at their tips in the melting snow, had in them all the power and mystery of the waxen baby touch.

With the quick illusion of childhood they had turned their task into a game, and they would break into exclamations of delight as they held up to each other's view some discovered morsel which the finder claimed to be the best.

"What are you going to do with these scraps?" I asked of the older child.

Her bloodless lips were trembling with the cold, and her small, dark eyes appeared among the shreds of tangled hair with an expression in them of a starved pariah whose cherished bone is threatened. She clasped the basket with both hands and half covered it with her little body.

"Don't you touch it!" she said, fiercely, while her anxious eyes searched the street in hope of succor.

It was easy to reassure her, and then she spoke freely.

"Ma sent us to get some grub for supper," she explained. "Ma's got three boarders, only two of 'em ain't paid nothing for a month, and pa, he's drunk. He ain't got no job, but he went out to shovel snow to-day, and ma thought he'd bring her some money, but he came home drunk. She's mindin' the baby, and she sent us for grub. She'd lick us if we didn't find none; but I guess she won't lick us now, will she? That's where we live," and one little chapped finger pointed down the alley to the crumbling hovel in the dark.

The children were ready to go home, and I lifted the younger girl into my arms. Her sister walked beside us with the basket in her hand. The little one lay soft and warm against me. After the first moment of surprise, she had relaxed with the gentle yielding of a little child, and I could feel her nestle close to me with the trustful ease which thrills one's inmost heart with feeling for which there are no words.

We opened the shanty door. It was difficult at first to make out the room's interior. Dense banks of tobacco-smoke drifted lazily through foul air in the cheerful light of a small oil-lamp. Shreds of old wall-paper hung from dark, greasy plaster, which was crumbling from the walls and ceiling and which lay in accumulations of lime-dust upon a rotting wooden floor. A baby of pallid, putty flesh was crying fretfully in the arms of a haggard, slatternly woman of less than thirty years, who sat in a broken chair, rocking the baby in her arms beside a dirty wooden table, on which were strewn fragments of broken pottery and unwashed forks and spoons and knives. A rough workman, stripped to his shirt and trousers, sat smoking a clay pipe, his bare feet resting in the oven of a rusty cooking-stove in which a fire was smouldering. Upon a heap of rags in one corner lay a drunken man asleep.

"We've got some grub, ma!" cried the older child, in a tone of success, as she ran up to her mother with the basket. "Riley's barrel was full to-night."

. . . .

In the continued search for work through the succeeding day it was natural to drift early into the employment bureaus. Clark and I made a careful round of these, he in search of employment at his trade and I of any job that offered. Here, too, however, we were but units in the great number of seekers. Some of the agencies offered for a small fee and a nominal price of transportation to ship us to the farther West or to the Northwest and insure us employment with gangs of day-laborers, but of work in Chicago they could promise none.

In the course of a day last week, as I was going about alone, I was attracted by the prominent sign of an employment bureau, on the West Side, which we had not visited so far. It was the conventional bureau, much like the office of a steamship company. It occupied the floor above the basement, reached by a flight of steps from the pavement; a row of wooden chairs stood along the outer wall; a wooden partition extended down the centre of the room, with a door and two windows in it. The hour was noon and the office was deserted but for a comparatively young man of florid face and close-set, light-brown eyes, thin hair, and a bristling mustache clipped close above his mouth. He was at work upon his books behind one of the windows. With a direct, matter-of-fact glance he looked me over, and then his eye sought the place on the open page held by his finger.

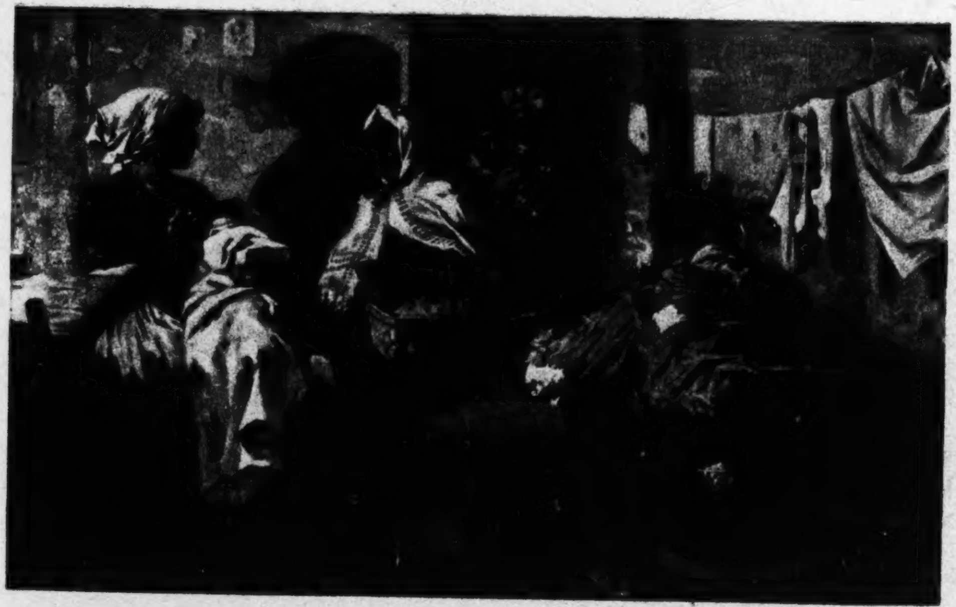
"What can I do for you?" he asked.

"I am looking for work," I said. "Have you any employment to offer?"

"What kind of work?"

"I am a day-laborer," I replied.

"Nothing," he said, laconically, and his eye



"WE'VE GOT SOME GRUB, MA!" CRIED THE OLDER CHILD, IN A TONE OF SUCCESS, AS SHE RAN UP TO HER MOTHER WITH THE BASKET. "RILEY'S BARREL WAS FULL TO-NIGHT."

followed the finger as it moved across the open page.

I waited for a moment, thinking that he might say more, but he remained silent at his work.

"If not in Chicago, perhaps you can put me in the way of work near here," I ventured.

"Young man," he said, and his clear, cold eyes were looking straight into mine, "Young man, we can't get enough of you fellows in the spring and summer time; we have to go to you and beg you to go to work. You're mighty independent then, and you don't give a damn for us. But it's our turn now. You can do some begging now and see how you like it. It's good enough for you. No, there ain't a job that I know of in Chicago that you can get, unless it is in the sewers, and you ain't fit for that."

"But give me a chance at it," I urged.

"I wouldn't take the responsibility," he answered. "It would kill a man of your build in a week, and you couldn't pass the first inspection, anyway." And so ended my efforts through the employment agencies.

The newspapers are always an unfailing resort, as a hopeful source of information of any demand for labor. A newspaper in the very early morning, before the city is astir, is a treasure, for any clew to work can then be promptly followed up with some chance of one's being the first to apply. Papers are to be had in abundance later in the day in public reading-rooms and about railway-stations and hotel-corridors. It is, however, the newspaper damp from press that is most valuable to us, and between us and its possession is often the insuperable barrier of its price. The journals which early post their issues upon bulletin-boards are public benefactors, and about these boards in the early dawn often there are groups of men who study closely the "want columns."

A very little experience was enough to disclose the fact that there is a wide difference in the character of these notices in different newspapers. In some issues the want-column is very short, but the statements bear every mark of genuineness; in others it is promisingly long, but, when carefully analyzed, it proves to be chiefly a collection of decoys for the unwary. The city seems to be full of men and women seeking employment. Not only are there the penniless common workmen of my class, whose number must be reckoned in many thousands, and among whom the professionally idle form, of course, a large percentage, but there are multitudes of mechanics and skilled workers, of whom Clark is a type. And beyond these is an army of seekers after salaried posts like those of clerks and bookkeepers and the various subordinate positions of business and professional life. Not all were penniless when they began their search for work there. Hundreds of them had a little store of money when their last employment gave out, or they brought with them when they came their savings, which they hopefully counted upon to last until a new place had been found.

How large a body of sharpers live by preying upon the credulity of these classes it would be difficult to discover, as it also would be difficult to discover all the tricks of their trade. The craft of the bunco-steerers is certainly well known, and yet it perennially finds its victims, and largely, no doubt, among the classes of whom I am speaking. But there are other snares, less sudden but quite as disastrous as those of the bunco-steerers, and far more insidious, since they have about them the apparent sanction of legitimate business. It is these that make most open use of the want-columns of certain of the newspapers. Agencies are advertised, and in them, after the payment of a small fee and the purchase of the needed outfit, large earnings are guaranteed as the result of putting some product upon the market. Opportunities are offered for the investment of a little capital—sums as low as five and ten dollars are solicited—and immense returns are promised.

Requests for men are made in urgent terms: "Wanted—three—five—seven men at once. Steady employment guaranteed; good pay. No previous experience necessary. Apply at No. — —— Street, second floor front."

One morning I marked a dozen or more of these notices in one newspaper, and carefully made the rounds of the addresses given. In every case I found an establishment which purported to do business at coloring photographs. I was offered employment in each instance. The conditions were as uniform as those governing a regular market. Two dollars was the invariable fee for being taught the secret of the process. One dollar would purchase the needed materials.

There was always a strong demand, enough to insure abundant work until spring. "Our agents are sending in large orders all the time," was the conventional explanation. "You can soon learn to color ten or twelve photographs in a day, and we will pay you at the rate of three dollars a dozen for them." The discovery that I had no money invariably brought the interview abruptly to an end in an atmosphere which cooled suddenly. I met many actual victims of these devices; one will serve as a type.

We both had been sitting for some time on a crowded bench in the lobby of a lodging-house.

Each was absorbed in his own "bitterness," and oblivious to the presence of other men and to the tumult of the room. My companion was cheerfully responsive when I spoke to him, and we both accepted gladly the relief of an interchange of confidence. He was three days beyond the end of his resources. So far he had been fortunate in securing the cost of food and the price of a ten-cent lodging, and had not yet been forced to the station-house. But on that evening, for the first time, he had learned of the station lodging. It loomed for him as the logic of events, and he dreaded it. It was of this that he was thinking gloomily when I spoke to him.

Born and bred in the country, he had grown up in ignorance, not of hard, honest work, nor altogether of books, but of the world. He had lived at home and worked on his father's farm and attended the winter sessions of the district school until he was sixteen, when his father and mother died, and the farm and all of their possessions were sold to pay the mortgage, and he was left penniless. Then he worked for other farmers for two years, and studied as best he could. Finally he secured a "second-grade certificate" to teach school, and he had taught in the winter sessions for two years, working as a farm-hand through the summers.

His coming to Chicago was a stroke of ambition. A post as a salesman or a bookkeeper could be got, he had felt sure, if he was persistent enough in his search, and this, he thought, would serve him as a starting-point to a business career. He had counted upon a long, hard search for place, and so he had come forearmed with his savings, which, when he reached Chicago, more than two months before this evening, amounted to a little over fifty dollars when he found himself in lodgings in a decent flat on Division Street.

He paid at first two dollars a week for a room which contained a bed and bureau and a washstand, and which was warmed by a small oil-stove. There was a strip of carpet on the floor, and a shade at the window which looked out upon an alley and the blank brick wall of a house opposite. The bed-linen was changed once in two weeks. In addition to that outlay he was spending, on an average, fifty cents a day for food and an occasional dime in car-fare. All this was luxury. His last lodging, before he was forced upon the street, was a seventy-five-cent closet in a house on Meridian Street, on the West Side. The room contained a cot with an old mattress and some blankets, and there was a soap-box on end which would hold a lamp. He was obliged to wash himself at the sink in the public passage.

There had been an analogous change in the range of employment sought. All idea of a mercantile post had been at last abandoned, and he was in for any honest living to which his hands could help him.

It was when he had broken his last five-dollar note that he made once more the rounds of the doubtful offices which offer work. A photograph-coloring establishment was his final choice. He paid the fee of two dollars, received the instructions, which were very simple, purchased for a dollar a box of materials, accepted half a dozen photographs to begin upon, and then went to his room with his mind made up to succeed at the work if there was any success in it.

With utmost patience and care he practised upon the pictures. Difficulties in the process arose against which he had not been warned. He went for further instructions and was given them willingly. After nearly three days of almost constant industry he finished the six photographs. These were to yield him a dollar and a half, and he took them with a sense of achievement to the office. His employer examined them and good-naturedly pointed out certain defects which he was asked to remedy. The remedy seemed simple, but he saw at a glance that, in reality, it would require his undoing practically all his work and performing it over again, at a great risk of ruining the photographs in the attempt.

He thought that he saw an escape from that, so he proposed to his employer that the alterations should be made at the establishment; that he himself should be paid nothing for the first work, but that he should be given a second lot of pictures to color. The man agreed instantly, and handed to him a fresh package containing half a dozen photographs. These he carried back to his room. When he undid the wrapper he found that he had been given a job which would require at least a week to finish. Each photograph was unlike the others. Besides one or two more or less difficult human figures in each, there were elaborate backgrounds of draperies and rustic benches and potted plants. He took the package back and asked for something simpler—more within his power as a beginner. His employer explained to him cheerfully that he had nothing else just then, but that he was sure of easier work for him by the time that he had finished this.

The poor fellow walked out into the street knowing that he had been swindled out of three dollars and three days' hard work, and that penniless now, he must take up the search again, and that there was no redress for him.

Several times after this I saw him and I pressed upon him each time the plan of returning to his former home in northern Indiana, or striking out anywhere into the open country, where his intelligence and his former experience would stand him in good stead, and where he would probably not have to look long for a job. This was keenly distasteful to him, for it would be a tacit acknowledgment of defeat, and the man was not without courage and pluck. I met him last one early morning after his first night as a lodger in a station-house. His eyes were starting from his head, and he wore the wild, hunted look which I had watched with alarm in Clark. He would scarcely stop to talk. He was off for the open country and his former home.

. . . .

Before many days had passed Clark and I began to lose the sense of being recruits in the army of the unemployed. We soon acquired the feeling of veterans, and with it a certain naturalness as of long habit. It is not a little strange how swift this adjustment is. We fell into some of the ways of the other men with an ease which seemed to imply a long antecedent wont. This was after Clark had despaired of work in a foundry, and had reached the level of willingness to sweep a crossing for a living, if only he could get the job.

One of the habits which came most readily to us was to join the crowds which stand in the early morning about the gates of large productive institutions. Sometimes a superintendent finds himself short-handed of common labor in a permanent department of the work or for an emergency, and he sends a foreman out to the gates to secure the needed men. This happens very rarely, if I may judge from our experience; and yet, upon so slender a chance as this, hundreds of men stand each day in the market-places for labor, waiting hopefully for some husbandman in want of workers.

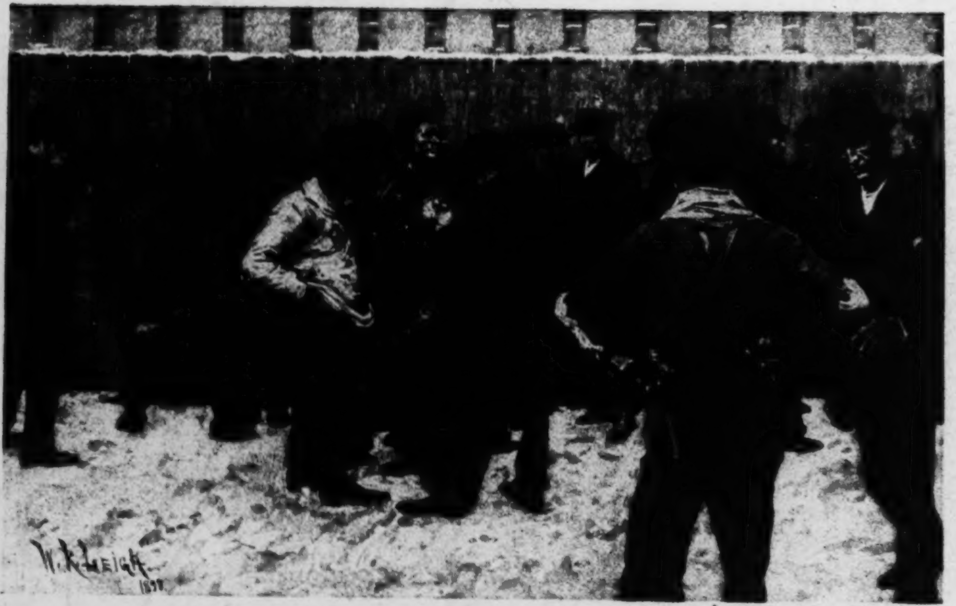
Clark and I soon made a considerable round. One morning we were at the gates of the Exposition grounds, another at the Stock-yards, and then at various factory gates on the West Side.

We were up at five one clear, cold morning near the middle of December, in order to try our luck at the gates of a factory which lies four miles or more from the heart of the city. It was no great hardship to set off without a breakfast, for we had supped heartily on the night before, and had gladly spent our remaining cash for beds in preference to sleeping in the station-house.

Out of a cloudless sky blew a strong, dry, northwest wind across the snowless prairies, and it cut sharply, at right angles, through the long diagonal street which we followed to the far southwest. We did not loiter, for it took our fastest gait to keep us warm. The buildings shielded us in part, but around the corners the wind caught us with its unchecked force, and enveloped us often in clouds of driven dust which rose from the surface of the frozen streets. There was exhilaration in the walk; when we reached the centre of the viaduct which carries Blue Island Avenue across the various lines of railway which enter the city between Fifteenth and Sixteenth Streets, we were in the full, unimpeded gale, and looking back we could see across the dark city the first slender shafts of light dimming the eastern stars.

It was still dark when we reached the factory gates, for the better part of an hour remained before the sun would be well up, and it was almost half an hour before the beginning of the day's work. We were not the first to be on hand. Already there were groups of men who stood before the fast-closed gate, or stamped slowly up and down on the sleepers of the railway which enters the factory yard, or gathered for shelter behind the walls of neighboring buildings. The number of these men was growing fast. I thought at first that many of them were employees waiting for the morning opening of the factory. But when the heavy gate moved down its groove in answer to the keeper's push, disclosing the open area of the factory yard and the long platforms flanking the warehouses, this company of waiting men, grown now to eighty or a hundred strong, stood against the high board fence and along the edges of a great stream of workingmen, which began to pour with increasing volume through the narrow way. A bell sounded from the factory tower, and you could hear the first slow movements of the piston-rods, and the answering stir among the fly-wheels as they warmed to swifter motion, and the straps and pulleys tuning up to the canticle of the working-day.

The sudden on-rush of factory-hands was almost a miracle. Men seemed to rise as by magic from the soil. They streamed from neighboring tenements, and along the wooden sidewalks, and from out the horse-cars which came down the streets loaded to the couplers. They had grown to the number of an army, and in rough, uneven, changing ranks they walked briskly, five, six, nine men abreast, while the bell tapped off nervously the swift approach of seven o'clock. Two men seated in a buggy drove their horse slowly into the thick of the crowd, which deflected at the gate to let them pass, and then closed in behind with increased momentum. The superin-


W. R. LEIGH.
1897.

WAITING FOR A JOB OUTSIDE THE FACTORY GATES.

tendent of the factory stepped down from the buggy and climbed the staircase to his office.

The converging lines of workmen made denser the mass that pressed quickly through the gate. There was little speech among them, and the noise they made was the shuffling, broken step of an unorganized crowd. But there was not wanting the inspiration of a moving throng of men. Some of them were old and much bent with pain and labor, and there were boys in the crowd who could be but little beyond their first decade of life, but the great body of the hands were young men between the ages of twenty and thirty-five. One could trace upon these faces all the stages of life's handicraft, in distorting human countenances into grotesque variations from all normal types of beauty, and bringing out upon them, in infinite variety, individual expressions of aggressive power and the strength which comes of long endurance. Ah, the hideous ugliness of the race to which we belong, and yet the more than beauty of it in the strong lines it bears of honest work faithfully done and of pain and sorrow bravely borne!

With the last sharp ringing of the bell there was a sudden rush of the living stream of workers, and then it abruptly ceased, and we, the unemployed, stood at both sides along the high board fence, like so much useless foam tossed off by the swift current which had poured through the narrow gate. The keeper began a monotonous march up and down the opening before his sentry-box. He was a muscular, blue-eyed Irishman of fifty-five or sixty, and he was in no wise ignorant of his business. There was nothing to indicate that he was aware of the presence of the crowd of expectant men, until some of us pressed too near to the gate in our anxiety to catch sight of a foreman in search of extra hands, and then he ordered us back with a violence which showed that we were one of the pests of his existence.

From some unseen quarter of the factory yard a closely covered wagon suddenly appeared. The paymaster presently descended from the superintendent's office, and entering the wagon, he was driven to the gate, where a halt was made while two loaded revolvers were handed to him by the porter, in full view of the idle men, and then he was driven rapidly up the avenue toward the city.

It was the usual heterogeneous crowd that lingered there about the gate. Most of them were Irishmen, I think, and there were certainly Italians and Scandinavians and some Welshmen, and even a few Polish Jews, while Clark and I, so far as I could judge, were the only native born. Not all of them could have been in the homeless plight in which we were, and there was scarcely a case of insufficient clothing among them, while many seemed to be habitual workmen who knew the decencies of home and of some home comfort. But there were not wanting men who, like us, were evidently upon the streets, and not only in dress, but in face, they suggested those who, if not already of that class, are swiftly approximating to professional tramps.

There was wonderful stillness in the crowd, which now had broken into small groups. A conscious tension possessed us, as of nervous watching for an uncertain event. Men spoke to one another in low tones scarcely above a whisper. An hour passed with nothing to break the monotony of its long anxiety. We were fairly shielded from the wind, and the sun had risen high and had begun to lend a generous aid to our efforts at keeping warm in the frost-bit air. The pale crescent of the waning moon had almost faded into the clear blue of the western sky. We soon were aware of the relaxing of tension, and then the men began to drift away toward other factories, or, disappointed, to their homes, or back to the aimless living of the streets.

Just then a young Hungarian came among us —a man of twenty-five, perhaps, short and erect and stocky, with an appearance of great muscular strength and a nervous quickness of step which was in full keeping with the wide-eyed inquisitiveness of his round, swarthy face. He was looking inquiringly at the clusters of loitering men and the open gate and the stolid porter in apparently heedless guard before it. I saw his eye sweep the crowd in seeking for a fellow-countryman, for it was written plain upon him that he was an immigrant and innocent of any language but his own. One could fairly see his mental process, it was all so clear: "I am looking for a job in this wide land of freedom to workingmen. Here is a great factory, and the open gate invites me. Why waste the time outside? For my part I shall go in at once and see the boss, and then go quickly on with no loss of time, if I should not be wanted here." One foot was just over the steel rail upon which the sliding gate moves, when, with the swiftness of the spring of a panther which has been crouching for its prey, the heavy hands of the seemingly careless watchman were upon his shoulders, and the man was held, amazed and paralyzed, in a vice-like grip.

"What are you after?" roared the porter in his face.

There was a murmured attempt at speech, and then the laborer was faced about with a suddenness and force that set his teeth to rattling in his head, and the porter turned him loose with successive parting kicks which seemed to lift the fellow from the ground.

He was tingling with pain as he slunk in among us, but the expression which he wore was one of strong, appealing bewilderment at the meaning of it all.

It was over in a moment, and then the cold, cowering, hungry mass of unhuman humanity at the gate broke into a low, gruff laugh.

It must have been this laugh that stung me to hot fury, for in an instant I had lost all sense of cold and weariness and hunger, and I was strong and warm in the wild joy of the lust for blood. With one hand gripping his hairy throat I was pounding the porter's eyes with my right first in blows whose frequency and precision surprised me into greater joy. But there was a sudden end of clear memory when, with a full-armed swing of his huge fist the keeper struck me in the face and knocked me, limp and almost senseless, upon the planks, where I lay choking down gulps of blood which flowed from a cut against my teeth.

Clark was bending over me.

"What in — did you hit him for, you — fool?" he hissed at me.

"I had a jolly good time doing it," I explained; and I was sufficiently recovered to laugh a little at the momentary sport which I had had in making a fool of myself.

Clark helped me to my feet, and we walked off together, only I could not walk very far at a stretch. He did not desert me, and he would not leave the subject of my folly. But he changed his point of view at length, and acknowledged, finally, that he was "glad that I had got in a few licks on the porter's eye," an emotion which I warmly shared.

That day was chiefly memorable because of Clark's final success in finding work. It came from a most unexpected quarter. We were walking together through Adams Street when a man touched Clark upon the shoulder and withdrew to the doorway of a shop. Clark recognized him at once as a foundry superintendent with whom he had been importunate for work, and his face lighted up with a hopefulness which made the moment almost tragic. I stood at the door-step and listened.

"Ain't you found a job yet?" began the superintendent.

"No."

"Well, I've been thinking about your case," he continued. "We ain't got a job for you at the foundry," he hastened to explain, "but I've heard from a friend of mine in Milwaukee, and

I WAS STRONG AND WARM IN THE WILD JOY OF THE LUST FOR BLOOD.

they're short of men in your line. Could you go up there?"

"I could walk," said Clark.

"Well, that ain't necessary. I—I'm good for a ticket," added the superintendent, with a look of embarrassment.

And he was as good as his word, for he went with Clark to the station, where he added to the ticket a dollar, both of which were accepted as a loan.

Clark was nearly mad with suppressed delight when he met me in the entrance of the post-office, where he had asked me to await his return. With his usual generosity he shared his good-fortune with me, and, before we went to the railway-station together we had a farewell dinner on beefsteak and onions and unlimited coffee and bread.

My own success followed Clark's by only a few days, when I was taken on as a hand-truckman in a factory on the West Side; but there is one intervening experience which belongs distinctively to this part of the general experiment.

I found, one early morning, among a lot of "fake" advertisements, which I had come to recognize with ease, one notice of "a man wanted" which rang with genuineness. Applicants were told to report at a certain shop just without the Stock-yards at twelve o'clock that day. In ample time I crossed over to Halsted Street and walked in a leisurely way down that marvellous thoroughfare. It was not new to me, and I was missing Clark sorely and was experiencing a new phase of the loneliness of being "left behind." And yet I could but mark again with fresh interest the wonders of this great artery of the West Side in the five miles of its length through which I walked to the appointed number. It is essentially a cheap street: cheap buildings line it, in which tenants rent cheap lodgings and shop-keepers employ cheap labor and sell cheap wares of every kind to those of the poor "whose destruction is their poverty." Every sort of structural flimsiness looks down upon you as you pass: ghastly imitations in stone of real, substantial buildings; the unblinking fronts of glaring red-brick shells, whose shoddiness is the more apparent in gaudy shops and in "all the modern improvements" and in the heavy cotton-lace at the upper windows. And there are wooden shanties with "false fronts," after the manner of frontier "cities," and wooden hovels with sloping roofs which are far along in process of decay, and here and there a substantial house which was built upon the open prairie, and which looks with amazement upon the fungus growth about it, while struggling pitifully to maintain its dignity in the uncongenial company which it is forced to keep.

Down miles of such a street I went on sidewalks which were chiefly rotting planks, with black mire, as of a pig-sty, straining through the cracks under the pressure of passing feet. The street itself is paved with cylindrical blocks of wood, ill laid at the beginning, and having now closely pounded filth between them, while the whole surface presents an infinite variety of concavities, in which, especially along the gutters, lay garbage in frozen, shallow cesspools.

A saloon stood on almost every corner, and sometimes I counted seven pawnbrokers' signs within the limits of a square. It was interesting to watch the run of "loan agencies," and "collateral banks," and other euphemisms under which the business was disguised.

Large quantities of provisions lay heaped in baskets and measures along the pavements in front of grocers' shops, catching the soot and the floating dust of the open street. Cheap ready-made and second-hand garments hung flapping like scare-crows overhead, or clothed grotesque wooden dummies which stood chained to the shop doors or to the wood-work below the show-windows. Scores of idle men, with the unvarying leaden eye and soggy droop of their kind, loungingly exchanged the comfort of a mutual support with door-posts, chiefly of saloons. Little children in every stage of condition, from decent warmth to utter rags, and from wholesome cleanliness to dirt grown clean in unconsciousness of itself, played about the pavements and in the gutters, or ran screaming with delight across the street-car lines, along which the trams moved slowly, drawn by horses with bells tinkling from the harness.

The first sight of my destination was very reassuring. It was evidently a shop of the first class. A second glance was disheartening, for already there were fully thirty men before me, and the number was increasing. From one of the men employed in the shop I learned that a man from the packing-house of the firm would be out to see us at the appointed hour. The appointed hour came and passed, and we waited on, our numbers grown now to nearly fifty. It was not far from two o'clock when the man appeared who had been commissioned to see us.

There is no tyranny like the tyranny of a hireling who is puffed up with momentary authority but who knows nothing of responsibility. The man who finally came among us was a clerical subordinate, sleek, clean-shaven, overfed; a man of thirty, dressed as any like Johnnie of the town, and, except for his slender hold upon the means of livelihood, no better than most of the men who now hung breathless upon his words.

He swaggered in among us with a leer and a call across the shop to a fellow-employee.

"Say, Jim, how's this for a collection of freaks, all out for a fifteen-dollar job?"

Jim was silent; he did not see the joke any better than did we, who now crowded about the clerk.

"Stand off," he ordered us, with a gesture of impatience and an oath. "Don't you fellows come so near. I guess most of you need water more than you need a job."

There followed some minutes of such banter, while the clerk looked us over and examined hastily some letters of recommendation which were held out to him. Then abruptly, with the air of a busy man chafing at the useless waste of his valuable time, he withdrew a step or two from the crowd, and from this coign of vantage he arbitrarily singled out four men. Having called them aside he ordered them to report at ten o'clock on the next morning at the packing-house, where a member of the firm would see them and select one of them for the place, which was that of general-utility man about a private house, at a wage of board and lodging and fifteen dollars a month.

I was not one of the number. In a few moments the men had all gone their several ways, but I waited behind, and seeing a chance of speaking to the clerk alone, I went up to him.

"Would you mind looking at these references?" I asked, and handed out two, one from the proprietor of the "—— House," where I had served as porter, and another from Mr. Hill, the farmer.

"Certainly not," he said, good-naturedly; and when he had read them he handed them back to me with the remark that I, too, might call with the others at ten o'clock.

Under the stone arch which spans the entrance to the Union Stock-yards I passed unchallenged the next morning. A wooden sidewalk led me along a miry road which seemed to pierce the centre of the yards. Men of widely varying ages passed and repassed me, mounted upon branded mustangs. They were riders who cared nothing for appearance in either kit or form, but rode with the free grace of cow-boys. On every side were scores of acres of open pens enclosed by stout wooden fences six palings high, with water and fodder troughs along the sides. From them came the deep, far lowing of a thousand herds of cattle which stood crowded in the pens or thinned to a few remaining, all of them patiently awaiting death. From great covered sheds you could hear the ceaseless bleating of countless flocks of sheep. From long covered passages overhead, each an awful bridge of sighs, there came the sharp clatter of cloven hoofs on wooden planks, along which droves of cattle were being driven to slaughter. In the distance beyond all this loomed high the unsightly packing-houses, where, with scientific efficiency and carefulest economy of materials, daily hecatombs are offered up for human life.

I soon found my way to the desired office. It was ten o'clock exactly, and to my great surprise I alone of the five selected men was on hand. I was told to wait, and a corner near a high desk was indicated as a place where I might stand. It was in a wide passage along which ranged inner offices enclosed by ground-glass partitions. Clerks were passing constantly from one office to another and meeting the requirements of business errands as they came in. Presently one of them spoke to me, and learning that I had received no reply from the clerk to whom I had first made my purpose known, he politely volunteered his services, and soon brought back word that Mr. —— would see me in a few minutes.

The few minutes had grown to thirty, when one of the other five men appeared. He was a fair-haired Swede of five-and-twenty, rather stout in frame, and dressed all in black, his coat, of the "Prince Albert" type, falling short of his knees, and disclosing about his neck and wrists the white of neat linen. With his hair brushed smooth, and one black-gloved hand grasping a fat umbrella and the other a soft felt hat, he might have been a divinity student.

We nodded to each other as he took up his stand in another out-of-the-way quarter of the hall and joined me in waiting for a summons. Among the passing clerks there presently appeared the one who had met us on the day before. He was not in bantering mood now, so he asserted his superiority by ignoring us. The one who had already spoken to me lost no opportunity as he passed of saying an encouraging word, assuring us that Mr. —— would certainly see us before long.

It was a little after twelve when I was finally called into the private office of Mr. ——. I was rather faint from hunger and stiff from standing still so long after a long walk.

Mr. —— sat with his back to a window, in whose full light I stood, hat in hand.

"You're after this job I advertised, I understand," he began.

"Yes."

"Well, it ain't no great job; it's just doin' chores round the house, and I can't afford to pay much for it. Have you ever done work like that?"

"I have been a porter at a hotel."

"Have you any recommends?" he asked, sharply. I handed to him the two already mentioned, and as he read them I watched him with close interest. Young, alert, intensely energetic, at the head, or near it, of a prominent house, the controller, in part at least, of an enormous enterprise, and a considerable personage, no doubt, in his own social circle, yet his wholesale butchery of swine could scarcely be a ghastlier slaughter than was his treatment of his mother-tongue.

He looked up at me.

"Say, young fellow, is them all the recommends you have? You was a very short time at both of them places."

This fatal defect in my references had never occurred to me, and I began to stammer explanations which only served to get me into deeper water. Mr. —— interrupted me, and handing back my letters, he said:

"You'll have to bring me something more satisfactory than them," and went on with his work.

The young Swede followed me out of the passage.

"Did you get the job?" he asked, in good English.

"No," I said, "not yet. You have a good chance; you would better wait until the boss sends for you."

"I guess not to-day," he answered, and he stolidly refused my advice, and I saw him disappear by another way from the Stock-yards.

CHAPTER IV

A HAND-TRUCKMAN IN A FACTORY

No. — Blue Island Avenue, Chicago,
Wednesday, February 3, 1892.

At half-past five this afternoon I completed seven weeks of service as a hand-truckman in a factory. Mrs. Schultz, my landlady, tells me that she is sorry that I am going away; and now that the long-looked-for end is come, I am not in the least elated, as I thought that I should be. But the days are lengthening markedly with the promise of the coming spring, and I am forcefully reminded that the time grows short for the study at close range of much that still awaits me in this great working city before I can well set out again upon my westward journey.

Seven weeks as a factory-hand is very little. Like all phases of my experiment, it is but the lightest touch upon the surface of the life which I seek to understand. Strong and infinitely appealing are the basal elements of existence, and yet mysterious, evasive, receding like a spectre from your craving grasp. And in the secret of its veiled presence speaks a Voice: "Only through living is it given unto men to know; none but the heaven-sent may know otherwise. Not by experiment, but only through the poignancy of real agony and joy is my secret learned."

As a witness of certain external conditions and as a sharer in them, I may tell nothing but the truth, and yet the whole truth reaches far beyond the compass of my vision—the joys and creature comforts of men whose birth and breeding and life-long training fit them smoothly to circumstances which seem to me all friction; the blind human agony of these men, as necessity bears hard upon them, and, helpless, they watch the sufferings of their wives and children, and have no hope nor any escape but death; the unconscious delight in living intensely in the present with easy adjustment to homely surroundings, and no anxious thought for the future and no morbid introspection; the sharply conscious endurance of grim realities, which baffle the untrained reason and paralyze the will, and make of a strong man a terrified child in the grip of the superstitious horrors of disease, and loss of work, and the "bad luck" which plays so large a part in that sordid thing which he calls life.

For seven weeks I have worked daily in the company of two thousand hands, and have lived with half a score of them in a tenement-house near the factory, and yet I am leaving them with but the slenderest knowledge of their lives.

It was one bitter cold morning a little past the middle of December that I was taken on. I had had a good supper on the night before and a sound night's sleep; and the pleasure of being set to work once more, of being caught up again into the meaningful movement of men, was tempered only by a lack of breakfast and a long walk through the cold gray dawn.

Crist was my boss. Crist is foreman of the gangs of men who load the box-cars which flank the long platforms beside the warehouses of the factory. Wide sloping eaves project from the buildings' sides to a point nearly over the edge of the platforms, and under these are stored the new mowers and reapers and harvesters, gay in gorgeous paint, and reduced to the point of easiest handling, their subordinate parts near by in compact crates and boxes, all ready for immediate shipment.

The proper loading of the cars is a work requiring great skill and ingenuity on Crist's part; for the men it is the mere muscular carrying out of his directions. Under Crist's guidance the superficial area of a car is made to hold an incredible amount. By long practice he has learned the greatest possible economy of space, in the nice adjustments of varying bulks, so that each load is a maximum, in point of number, of complete machines.

There was like shrewdness, I thought, in his handling of the men. After his first orders to me I came almost not at all under his direct control through the few days in which I worked in his department. But I had many opportunities then and later, too, of observing him. A tall, old, lithe Norwegian, with a certain awkward, lanky efficiency of movement, he had the mild manner and the soft, low speech of the hard-of-hearing. He never blustered, certainly, and apparently he never swore, but the men under him worked without hurry and without intervals in a way which told superbly in the total work accomplished.

A gang of six or eight laborers under his direction was just beginning the loading of an empty box-car when I was taken on. They were stalwart, hardy workmen for the most part, their faces aglow in the cold, their muscular bodies warmly clothed, and the folded rims of their heavy woollen caps drawn down to protect their ears. Over their work-stained overalls some of them wore thick leather aprons which were darkened and polished by wear to the appearance of

LOADING THE BOX-CARS UNDER CRIST'S GUIDANCE.

well-seasoned razor-strops, and on their hands they all wore stout gloves or mittens, which, through long use, had reached a perfect flexibility and fitness to their work.

"John," said Crist, addressing one of the gang, a short, rather slender Irishman, with a smooth-shaven, sallow face, "John, you take this man and fetch down the dry tongues from the paint-shop. There's the wagon-truck," and he pointed to a vehicle whose heavy box, open at both ends, and rising at the sides to a height of three feet, was supported on two small iron wheels, while an iron leg under the heavier end kept the bottom of the truck horizontal.

"Yes, sir," came instantly from John, as he stepped alertly from among the men and joined me, his small, gray eyes looking inquisitively into mine and showing in their sudden light the pleasure which he felt in being thus singled out for special work and put in charge of a new hand.

"Come this way," he said to me. "Me and you is partners. What's your name? My name's John, John Barry. Some calls me Jake, but my name's John," he concluded, with an emphasis which made it clear that he had a rooted objection to "Jake."

Barry's Christian name I considered a poaching upon my preserve, and I was feeling about for a new handy prænomen; but without waiting for an answer he continued swiftly on his loquacious way, calling me "partner" the while, as Clark had done, and "partner" I remained through the days of our co-labor.

Barry was an old hand; he knew his way about the factory perfectly. We pushed the truck before us into a warehouse and through a long, dim passage between piles of various portions of the various machines which rose to the ceiling in compact stacks on both sides of us as we walked the great length of the building. It was as dark as a tunnel, except where an occasional gas-jet burned brightly in the centre of a misty halo. The cold, unchanging air that never knew the sun-light chilled us to the bone, and near the gas we could see our breath rising in clouds of white vapor. We came at last to an elevator, and, having pushed our truck aboard, we rose to the next landing. Then down another long, dark, damp passage we passed until we reached a covered bridge, a run-way, as the men call it, which sloped upward to the paint-shop in the main building of the factory.

The spring-doors at the head of the bridge flew open to the sharp ram of our truck, and we followed into a large room which was flooded with sunlight from its serried windows. There appeared to be hundreds of "binders" in the room, all painted white and extending in long, straight rows on wooden supports which held them a few feet from the floor. Among these rows moved the men who "stripe" the binders. Their hands and clothing were daubed with paint, and even as we passed we could see the slender, even lines of brilliant color appearing as by magic along the white surface of the machines under the swift, sure stroke of these skilled painters.

This is their sole occupation. Along a side-wall of the room moves slowly, on a ceiling-trolley, a long line of steel binders, all grimy from the hands of the men who join the different parts. In one corner is a tank of white paint, and by a system of pulleys each binder, as it passes, is lowered to the bath, completely immersed, and then drawn dripping back to the trolley. Presently it is lowered to a support, and is there allowed to dry. The stripers move down the lines, following close upon the drying of the paint, and the machines, soon ready for shipment from their hands, are transferred to the packing-rooms, the vacant places being quickly occupied by binders fresh from the bath. This is one phase of the endless chain of factory production under high division of labor.

Barry and I passed on through a communicating door to another room of about equal size and of equal light and airiness with the last. The temperate air was pungent with the smell of varnish and new paint. It passed with a pleasant sense of stinging freshness down into our lungs. We had reached our destination; for large sections of the room were closely stacked with tongues of various sizes, all standing on end in an ingenious system of grooves on the floor and ceiling. Some were newly come from the turning-mill; others had been painted, and now awaited varnishing; some had passed both of these processes, and were ready for the stripers; while in one corner stood those which had been painted and varnished and striped, and which were dry and ready to be taken to the platform, where Crist had ordered Barry and me to stack them.

Barry soon taught me how to load them properly, and, having filled the truck, we descended by an elevator to the ground-floor and passed out again into the bracing air of the open platforms, where we carefully stacked the tongues under the eaves, convenient to the loading of the cars. Round after round we made, going always and returning by the same course, loading the truck and stacking the tongues as quickly as we could. The work was not hard. There was a knack in the proper handling of the tongues, but it was

IN THE FACTORY.

readily acquired, and then one could settle down easily to the routine of work, whose monotony was broken by the recurring trips.

One incident checked us in the way. It was our happening to meet the timekeeper on his rounds. Barry dropped everything until he had made assurance doubly sure that his presence had been duly noted in the book. Seeing that I was a new hand the time-keeper quickly took my name, and then passed on with a parting word of caution to me about the proper record of my time.

Barry was evidently in high enjoyment of the situation. The work suited him, and the directing of a novice was hugely to his taste. There was little stay in the even current of his talk. I began to feel not unlike a "new boy" at school, for, with the air of a mentor, he pointed out to me all the sections of the factory, and the different occupations of the men, and the individual foremen as we chanced to see them. Once, as we were busily stacking tongues, his voice fell suddenly to a confidential tone, and his task was plied with tenser energy.

"Do you see that man talking to Crist?" he said to me, almost in a whisper, and with his eyes intent upon his work.

I had noticed someone who seemed to be a member of the managing staff.

"That's Mr. Adams," Barry continued. "He ain't the head boss, but he's next to the head. He's an awful nice man. He was a workingman himself once. I've heard that he was a carpenter in the factory when the old man was alive, and that he was promoted to be next to the head boss. He knows what work is, and he's awful nice to the men, but you don't never want to let him catch you idle."

We had just finished stacking the load and had started again for the warehouse, when we caught sight of a neatly dressed man of medium height who was crossing a temporary bridge, which joined the platform by the main building over the railway-track to the one where we were at work. I felt the truck shoot forward at a speed which I had to follow almost at a run. In the dark passage of the warehouse Barry was soon talking again, and again in an awed undertone.

"That was the head boss," he said, impressively. "That was Mr. Young himself." And he looked surprised that I did not stagger under the announcement, although, to do him justice, I did feel a good deal as the new boy might, brought unexpectedly for the first time into the presence of the head master.

"He ain't never worked a day in his life," Barry was continuing. "Only he's a terrible fine superintendent. You bet he gets big wages. They say he can see when he ain't looking, and he comes down like a thousand of brick on any man who shirks his work. He ain't never worked himself, and so he don't know what it is."

The noon-whistle sounded soon after this, to my great relief, for a fast of eighteen hours was telling on me. Barry left the truck where it stood, and broke into a run. I followed him. In a moment the whole building and the outer platforms were echoing to the tread of running feet. When I reached the factory-yard I found crowds of men streaming from every door and pressing swiftly through the gate. A stranger to the scene might at first sight have supposed the building to be on fire and that the men were escaping, but a second glance would have corrected the idea. There was no excitement in their mood; nor was there any playfulness; but with set, serious faces they were running for the careful economy of time. Barry had explained to me that, in order to quit the day's work at half-past five, the hands take but half an hour for their mid-day meal, and that I must, therefore, be careful to be within the factory-gates by half-past twelve.

Interesting as was the scene, I had no time to note it carefully, for I had caught the contagion of feverish hurry, and with the greater need on my part, for in that half hour I must get food if I was to return to work.

The situation was a little difficult. I had no money and no knowledge of any neighboring boarding-house. On the avenue, immediately opposite the wide entrance of the factory, was a line of cheap three-storied wooden tenements, the ground-floors occupied by saloons or shops, and the upper ones used evidently as the homes of factory-hands, for I could see the men entering the dark passages where narrow staircases connected the dwelling-rooms with the street.

Quite at random I walked into a barber-shop.

"Can you direct me to a boarding-house near by?" I asked the barber, who, dressed in soiled white, sat reading a newspaper beside the stove.

"Sure," he said, obligingly, as he rose to his feet and came to the door and opened it. "You just go up them steps," he added, pointing to the entry next door, "and you'll find a lady that keeps boarders. Her name's Mrs. Schulz. You tell her that I sent you."

At the head of the landing I stood irresolute for a moment. It was dark after the unclouded mid-day. The light that entered came through the narrow opening of a door at the end of the passage, which stood ajar and which communicated with a front room, where there seemed to be a flood of sunlight. The prospect in the other direction was not so bright. I was beginning to see faintly, and could eventually make out the figures of a dozen or more working-men, who sat about a table in a dim dining-room, eating hurriedly their dinner, with a noise of much clatter, and with bursts of loud talk and of hearty laughter. In a deeper recess, and through a short, dark, communicating passage, was a kitchen full of steam and the vapors of cooking food, through which came the light from the rear windows with the effect of shining vaguely through a fog.

Summoned, I know not how, Mrs. Schulz stepped out into the passage. I knew instantly that I should be provided for. I could not see her clearly, but her quiet, self-respecting manner was reassuring from the start.

"I've just got a job in the factory," I explained at once. "Can you take me as a boarder?"

"I guess I can," she answered, cordially. "Do you want your dinner?"

"Yes," I said, and tried not to say it too eagerly.

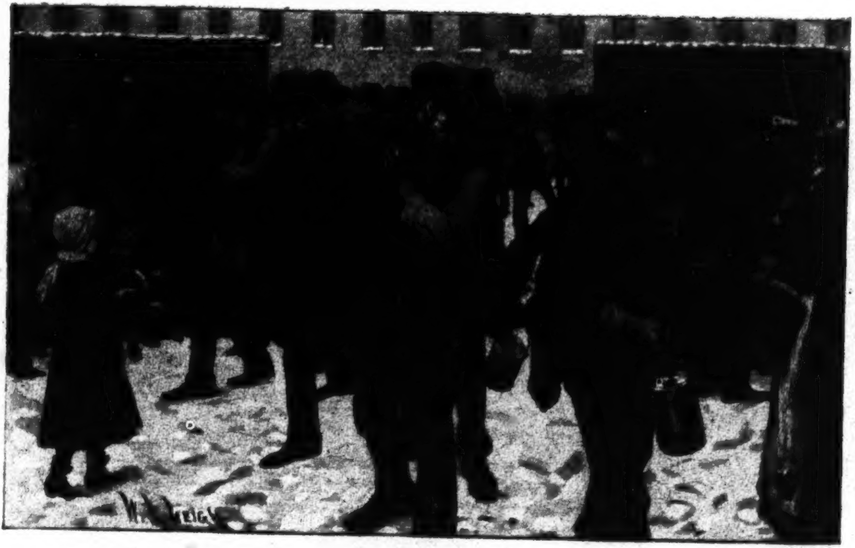
"Then come right in. You haven't any too much time," she added, considerately.

At the vacant place which she indicated for me at the table I sat down between a workman of my own age and a hunchback operative who was probably ten years our senior.

"How are you?" said the first man, in the midst of the momentary lull which fell upon the room, while I passed my first inspection.

My reply was drowned for farther ears than his in the recurrent flow of talk about the table. The men had just finished their first course, but Mrs. Schulz brought in for me a plate of hot vegetable soup, steaming with a savoriness which was reviving in itself. My cordial neighbor dropped out of the general conversation and devoted himself to me. Nothing could have been more agreeable. He was as natural as a child, and genial to the point of readiest laughter. Like most of the other men, he sat coatless in his working-clothes, his face and hands black with the grime of the machine-shop where he worked, and his eyes shining with a light all the merrier for their dark setting.

A young American, a farmer's son, he was recently come to Chicago from his home in central Iowa, and was making his way as a factory-hand and liked it greatly. His name was Albert. All of this information I gathered in barter for an equal share of my personal history, exchanged while we both ate heartily of a dinner of boiled



CROWDS OF MEN STREAMING FROM EVERY DOOR AND PRESSING SWIFTLY THROUGH THE GATE

meat and mashed potatoes, and stewed tomatoes and bread and coffee, and finally a slice of pumpkin pie, all of them excellent of their kind and most excellently cooked; and, although not neatly served, yet with as great a regard to neatness as the circumstances allowed.

My interest through the meal, aside from the food, was chiefly in Albert, but I caught, too, the drift of the general talk. It was directed at one Clarence, a fair-haired, fair-skinned, well-mannered youth who sat opposite us and ~~at~~ an end of the line. One noticed him immediately in the contrast which he made with the other men, for he was dressed in a " boiled " shirt and a collar, and he wore a neat black coat and a black cravat. It appeared that he had been promoted, on the day before, from a subordinate position in one of the machine-shops to the supervision of the tool-room of the factory. On this morning for the first time he had gone to work dressed, not in the usual blue jeans, but as one of the clerical force. The men were chaffing him on the change. Curiously enough, from their point of view, his working-days were over. There was no least disturbance in their personal attitude to the man nor in their feeling for him as a fellow. They recognized the change of status as a promotion, and you readily caught the note of sincere congratulation in their banter, and the boy bore his honors modestly and like a man. Yet it was a change of status most complete, for he had ceased to be a worker. To their way of thinking there may be forms of toil which are hard and even exhausting, but only that is "work" which brings your hands into immediate contact with the materials of production in their making from the raw or in their transportation. The principle is a broad one, incapable of application in full detail, but, as a principle, it figures in the minds of the workers as an unquestioned generalization that men work only with their hands and in forms of begriming labor.

Like Albert, Clarence, too, was an American, a youth from a village home in Ohio, and with the promise of a successful hazard of his fortunes in the city. I employ my versions of their Christian names because these were the only appellations in use about the table.

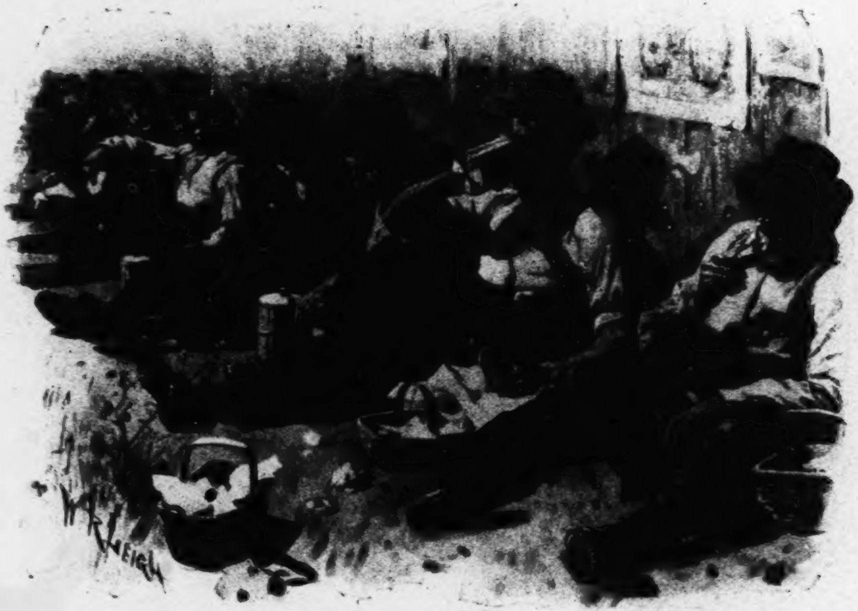
The meal was far too short for any general acquaintance among the men, and at its end we all hurried back to the factory. Barry was awaiting me beside the truck; as we began the rounds of the afternoon's work he questioned me with interest about my success in getting a dinner. For another five continuous hours we carted tongues and stacked them.

The hands had been working by gas-light for nearly an hour when the time came for quitting the day's labor. There was no rush now in leaving the factory. We crowded out through the gate, but under no high pressure, and the moving mass disintegrated and disappeared as magically as it had formed in the early morning. Beside the entrance idle men were again waiting, but their number was very few in contrast with the morning crowds, and their apparent purpose was a personal interview with the superintendent.

Mrs. Schulz's boarders had soon reassembled, this time in her kitchen. Everything was in readiness for us. A row of tin basins stood in a long sink which extended under the rear windows nearly the length of the room; buckets of hot water were convenient, and at the pump at one end of the sink we could temper the water in the basins to our liking. Finally, there were cakes of soap cut from large bars, and the usual coarse towels hanging from rollers on the walls. With sleeves rolled up and our shirts wide open at the neck, we took our turns at the basins. It was interesting to watch the faces of the mechanics emerge from the washing in frequent changes of water to their natural flesh-color, in which the features could be clearly distinguished.

The few minutes during which we had to wait before the call to supper were spent in the front room, which was the sitting-room for the boarders and answered to the lobby in the logging-camp. Two windows looked out upon the street and commanded a farther view of the factory-yard and buildings. The room was heated by a cylindrical iron stove, standing near the inner wall upon a disc of zinc, that served to protect a well-worn carpet with which the floor was covered. From a square wooden table in the centre a large oil-lamp flooded the room with light and brought out in startling vividness the pink rose-buds which in monotonous identity of design streaked the walls in long diagonal lines, broken only by an occasional chromo or a picture cut from an illustrated print. There was an abundant supply of wooden chairs, on which the men were seated, for the most part about the stove, and there was one large arm-chair on rockers, where sat Mr. Schulz with the next to the youngest child in his arms, an infant of between two and three. A girl of perhaps seven years, and a boy of nearly five, were playing together on the floor, and there was yet another child, for while we were washing in the kitchen I had heard the fretful cry of a baby from a dark chamber opening from that room.

Two of the men were intent upon the girl who



THE NOON HOUR.

lay in her father's lap. They were rivals for her favor, and both were trying to coax her away. When she at last put out her arms to one of them, he tossed her toward the ceiling with a shout of glee at his triumph over the other man.

After supper we all regathered in the sitting-room. None of the men, so far as I could see, went out for the evening. Some of them read the newspapers of the day, and four had presently started a game of "High, Low, Jack," at the table, with the result that most of the others were soon gathered about the players in excited interest, watching the varying fortunes of the game and giving vent to their feelings in boisterous outbursts.

I sat beside the fire talking to Mr. Schulz. There was inexpressible satisfaction in the feeling of *raison dètre* which one had in being a worker with a steady job once more and a decent place in which to live. A boarding-house is not a synonym for home, and yet it may stir the domestic instincts deeply in the contrasts which it offers with the homeless life of the streets. The unquestioning hospitality with which I had been accepted as a guest was in keeping with the best of my experience so far. There was no suggestion of my paying anything in advance, though I had no security to offer beyond the fact that I was regularly employed in the factory and my promise to pay promptly out of the first instalment of my wages.

Mrs. Schulz had offered me board and lodging at four dollars a week, or at four dollars and a quarter if I wished a room to myself. It was the last bargain with which I closed when I was shown the only vacant room. It opened from the passage near the head of the landing and was perhaps seven feet by six. A single bed filled most of its area, and the rest was crowded with a chair and a small stand which supported an oil-lamp under a mirror on the wall. Some nails driven into the door and along the wall beside it, served the purpose of a closet. Light and air entered by a window which opened only a foot or two from a side-wall of the next building.

Cheerless as the room was and far from clean, it yet had about it all the essentials of privacy, and at a little past eight o'clock I went to bed with almost the sense of luxury after a fortnight's experience of station-houses and cheap lodgings.

At six in the morning we were called by Mrs. Schulz, who had already been up for an hour or more preparing our breakfast, with the help of a hired girl. The men turned out sleepy and half-dressed into the kitchen to wash themselves, and then we sat down to a breakfast of "mush," meat and potatoes, coffee and bread. The factory-bell was ringing by the time that we had finished, and there was a rush to get within the gate before the last taps marked the advent of seven o'clock.

The routine of factory work does not lend itself to varied narrative, and yet Barry's work and mine was far from the monotony of much of the labor which we saw about us. There was a growing supply of tongues in the paint-shop, sufficient to keep us busy for several days, and while the work of loading and carting and stacking them was not hard in itself, ten hours of it daily was enough to send a man very hungry to his meals and thoroughly tired to his bed.

I was soon transferred from Crist's department to one of the packing-rooms, where, through the remaining weeks of my service, I worked as a general utility man under the orders of a short, muscular foreman of singularly mild manner, who appeared to have scruples against swearing, but who was none the less vigilant and effective in his management. Most of the work of his department, as in all the departments of the factory, came under the piece-work system, and I was simply one of the two or three common laborers who, under his commands, attended to the odds and ends of jobs.

In one corner a man was packing boxes with the subordinate parts of mowers—a very interesting process, for the boxes were of such a size as to exactly hold all the loose parts when packed in a certain relation to one another, and the untiring swiftness with which the packer drew his supplies from their various bins and adjusted them in the box and nailed the lid upon them was fascinating in itself. I was sometimes employed in carting these boxes on a hand-truck, through a long run-way, to a warehouse and storing them there.

There were mowers to be shipped to foreign markets, and these had all to be done up in boxes. Three or four of us would be employed for days together in bringing the mowers up the run-way from the warehouse and further separating them into their parts and packing them in large boxes and nailing down the covers, upon which afterward appeared directions to distant ports, some to Russia, and others as far off even as Australian and New Zealand towns. A paint-shop was also connected with this department of the factory, where painting was done in the wholesale fashion employed for the binders, and from it I often carted the portions of the machines which were ready for the warehouse.

Some of the jobs held steadily for days together, and the foreman was never without work

MRS. SCHULZ'S BOARDING-HOUSE.

There we regularly gathered after supper, and smoked, and romped with the children, and played cards, and read.

to give me. I could but feel a growing liking for him, for, although I was far from being an efficient workman, he was patient with my awkward efforts, and he accepted my mere dogged perseverance as evidence of a willingness on my part which reconciled him to me as a hand.

A like consideration had been shown me by the men at the boarding-house. They accepted me unhesitatingly as a workingman, but still I felt that I had my way to make among them, and very justly, for they were piece-workers all of them, earning fifteen dollars a week at the very least, some of them much more, while I was merely a common laborer at a dollar and a half a day. Their superiority to me was only the more apparent when there came among us, a few days after my arrival, a young Englishman from Jamaica, who had secured a job at common labor in the factory; for he, too, was far ahead of me, and it was not long before he was promoted to piece-work in one of the better-paid departments.

There was no discrimination against me. The men were perfectly friendly, but for the most part they had been associated for some time in their work and in their life in the boarding-house, and I was simply not of their set. The barriers which prevented entire freedom of intercourse were my own limitations and were never of their making, for they made the most generous advances when we had lived together for a time, and no doubt I could eventually have risen to be one of them on equal terms.

They were nearly all young Americans. Clarence and Albert were representative of the lot. Ned, the hunchback operative, was older than most of us, but he, too, was a native, of public-school education and decent antecedents, and he made a very good wage as a piece-worker in some department of the factory. Nothing that I saw among the men charmed me more than their treatment of Ned. He had an ungovernable temper and a crabbed, sullen disposition, which had been fostered by much suffering and an intense mortification due to his deformity, which he rarely forgot, apparently. At times he was as exasperating as a spoiled, petulant child, but the men endured him always with an evenness of buoyant good-humor so genuine that it never chafed him, and it sometimes transported him, in spite of himself, to a mood in sympathy with their own, in which he could be one of the best fellows of the lot.

It was not long before I knew that the man who was held in highest regard by the others was Dennis. The reasons for this did not appear at first. Dennis was of about the average age among us, a man of between twenty-five and thirty, an Irish-American of good appearance and a gentlemanlike reserve. The men looked up to him and paid a certain deference to his views in a way which puzzled me, for he never played the rôle of leader, being far less outspoken than some of the others, and moving among them always in a quiet, unassuming manner which laid no claim to distinction.

By chance I learned that he was the best-paid operative in the house, having a position of some importance in a machine-shop of the factory, and I noticed that he spent much of his leisure in the study of mechanical problems. He did not hold himself aloof from the evening game of cards, but he would quit it early and would soon be absorbed in his book in one corner of the room, where the noise seemed never to disturb him. Moreover, I came to realize that in certain important social matters Dennis was an authority. He would leave his work as black as the blackest man from the shops, but on Saturday afternoon, when we got off at five o'clock, half an hour earlier than usual, he would come out after supper ready for the evening's gayety, dressed in what was unhesitatingly accepted as the height of the fashion. Saturday evenings were always devoted to pleasure, and none of the men was better informed than was Dennis as to the public balls which were available and which performance at the theatres (always spoken of as a " show ") was best worth a visit. As a workman of high grade and as a man of fashion and a social mentor with much occult knowledge of social form, he was yielded the first place. There was, moreover, a certain punctiliousness about him which only served to heighten his standing. It mattered not how late he had been out on Saturday night, I always found Dennis at his place for a seven o'clock breakfast on Sunday morning, and saw him start promptly for mass.

He was very evidently a favorite with Mrs. Schulz, and with small wonder, for he was always most considerately kind to her and to her children; but I thought that her liking for him grew quite as much out of her admiration for his strict regard to his church duties. She went to early mass herself, but she never failed to have breakfast ready for Dennis at exactly seven o'clock.

Mr. Schulz and she were devout Catholics, only I could but admire her devotion the more. It seemed to me to be put to so crucial a test. With but a raw Swedish girl to help her, she had the care of her five children besides all the cooking and other housework for a dozen boarders whose meals must be served on the minute. I am sure that I never saw her lose her temper, and I think that I never heard her complain, which is the greater wonder when one takes into account the fact that she was the sole bread-winner of the family. Mr. Schulz had had a job as a night-watchman, but had lost it, and was now looking for work—not too conscientiously, I fear, for he impressed me as a weak man who found his wife's support a welcome escape from a personal struggle for existence. He had, at least, the negative virtue of sobriety, and the positive one of loyalty to church duty, and in the house he perhaps could not have served his wife to better purpose than by taking care of the children as he did. He was certainly very proud of Mrs. Schulz. One day he confided to me the fact that she was a cook when he married her, and that in her day she had served in some of the palaces on Michigan Avenue. Such an experience explained the admirable cooking of the simple fare which she gave us, and the homelike management of her house; and her knowledge and skill in these domestic matters bore no small relation, I thought, to the spirit of contentment among the men, which held them to their quiet evenings in her sitting-room against the allurements of the town.

Her sheer physical endurance was a marvel. It was the unflinching courage of a brave soul, for she had little strength besides. Very tall and slight, emaciated almost to gauntness, she had a long, thin face with sunken cheeks and a dark complexion and jet-black hair, and round, soft, innocent eyes, which, matched with her indomitable spirit, were eloquent of the love which is "comrade to the lesser faith that sees the course of human things," and seeing finds life worth living and is willing to endure.

The absence of self-consciousness from the members of this household lent a peculiar attractiveness to the life there. There was nothing morbid in their attitude to themselves nor in their relation to one another. Life was so obviously their master, and they so implicitly obedient to its control. You could lose in a measure the thought of self-directed effort to be something or do something, in the sense that you got of nearness to the spontaneity of primal force. Mrs. Schulz, for example, never impressed one as trying to exercise a certain influence in obedience to a volition formed upon a preconceived plan, but rather as being what she was as the expression of a life within and exercising an influence which was dominant by reason of its native virtue. And the men were never awkward and constrained in their courteous manner toward her, as they would have been had this been prompted by a sense of formal politeness, instead of being, as it was, their spontaneous tribute to her gentle ladyhood.

One wondered at first how such serenity would weather the storms. And when they came, the wonder grew at the further naturalness which they revealed.

Monday mornings were apt to be prolific of bad weather. The long, monotonous week loomed before us, and our nerves were unstrung with the violent reaction bred of over-indulgence in the freedom of a holiday. Our tempers, as a result, were all out of tune, and there was no merging of individuality in the harmony of a home. One was reminded of the discordant harping, each on its own string, of all the instruments of an orchestra before they blend melodiously in the accord of the overture. The hired girl, awkward and ungainly and dense, had neglected the mush and let it burn, and now with stupid vacancy in her dull eyes she moved about more in the way than of any service. The children, half-dressed in their pitiful, soiled garments, were sprawling underfoot, quarrelling among themselves and whimpering in their appeals for their mother's intervention. Mrs. Schulz, at her wits' end to get breakfast ready promptly, was bending over a stove whose fire smouldered and smoked and would not burn briskly in the raw east wind which was blowing down the chimney, and at the same time there grated on her ears the wails of the children and the ill-tempered complaints of the men and the stupid questions of the hired girl, and all the while her nerves were throbbing to the dull agony of a toothache. The men, roused from insufficient sleep, were crowding into the overcrowded kitchen, hectoring one another for their slowness at the basins; one loud in his complaint over the loss of some article of dress, another insistent in his demand for a turn at the mirror, and all of them perilously near the verge of a violent outbreak. There was much swearing of a very sincere kind and much plain speaking of personal views without circumlocution or reservation, but in the end the storm would spend its fury and pass. And the marvel of it was in the completeness of the clearing. The unrestrained vent of ill-temper would be followed by no harboring of malice. It was as though the men, who had freed themselves of a load of ill-feeling, were prepared to continue unhampered in the ease of agreeable association. The secret of it lay, I presume, in the absence of malignant antagonisms. The distempers were merely the results of the common attrition of life. At bottom these hard-working, self-respecting persons respected and liked one another, and in the intimacy of the crowded tenement they lived in relative comfort on no other possible terms than those of common liking and respect.

The factory itself further illustrated the periodic unevennesses of temper. Not that they were strictly periodic in the home. Mondays were apt to witness them, but there was no normal regularity in their occurrence, for they might crop out at any time. But Monday mornings in the factory were almost fatally sure of their emergence. You could not escape the feeling of unwonted disturbance both in the humor of the men and in the progress of their work. But nothing could have been more potent in coaxing them again into an accordant frame of mind than the routine of factory labor. The very doing of what had become to them a second nature by a quickness of hand which itself was a mark of mastery, seemed to win them back to cheerful acceptance of life. I have often seen the men at the boarding-house leave the breakfast-table in moods that "varied mostly for the worse," and return to it at noon in high spirits that were finely attune.

There is a monotony about piece-work which must take on at times the quality of a maddening horror. I can bear no personal testimony to it, because I did not rise to the position of a pieceworker. The phases of the system which I saw, however, in the limited insight into its practical working to be gained in my range in the factory as a common laborer, impressed me rather with its advantages. Among the day-laborers here there was apparent at once the same deadly uninterest in their work which is characteristic of their class in the present ordering of such labor. The attitude is that of irresponsible school-boys in their feeling of natural hostility to their masters in the mutual struggle over the prescribed tasks. But among the laborers it takes on the tragedy of the relation of grown men to the serious business of their lives. Interest in their work? Not the faintest. Sense of responsibility for it? Not the dimmest. Any day you could see the bearded father of a family shirk his task in a momentary absence of the boss, or steal truant minutes from his time in idling on an errand, with as puerile a spirit as that which prompts a stroke of mischief in school-hours.

The piece-system lifts the labor instantly from this plane to one where the motive of self-interest conspicuously enters. A man is insured from the first of at least the wage of day's labor; his own industry and deftness are then the factors in determining his earnings up to a certain limit. For I soon found that a hand was not free to employ his utmost skill when he became an expert.

There seemed to be a tacit agreement in each department of the factory as to what should constitute the maximum of day's labor. Below that a man might fall if he chose, but beyond it he was not at liberty to go. And the reason was very obvious. Even a few men in continually passing, by any considerable margin, the accepted daily average would inevitably produce the result of a cut in the *pro rata* price until wages were down again to the accustomed level. The system gives a man an incentive to work and to develop his skill, but, in its practical operation, it holds him rigorously to the level of mediocre attainment.

Barry incidentally pointed this out to me with striking clearness one day while we were carting tongues. Two of the varnishers were missing from the paint-shop when we went up for our first loads. Barry remarked on their absence, with the comment that they were certain to be on hand at half-past nine o'clock.

It appears that if an employee misses the open factory-gate in the early morning by ever so little, he may not enter then until the end of two hours and a half, which marks the close of the first quarter of the day's work.

True to Barry's prediction, we presently found both varnishers at their places, and when, in the late afternoon, he asked them, with the frankness of working-people in such matters, as to how much they had done, he again found himself verified, since each had achieved the prescribed amount, and so had earned full pay. They had simply worked at a greater speed than usual; and they might, so far as the time was concerned, have accomplished this every day, except that a man would soon gain a bad name by being habitually late, and his promptness at seven o'clock would be quickly insured by a cut in the rate paid for his form of labor.

It was a very limited view of the factory as a whole that I could get from the post of an unskilled worker in one of its departments, but what growing familiarity was possible served to increase the sense of wonder at the possibilities of such highly organized methods of production.

There were the great, substantial buildings themselves with their ingenious adjustments of parts, so related as to facilitate to the utmost the processes of manufacture and shipment at the lowest cost and with the least friction. There were the lines of railway which entered the grounds, by means of which the machines, loaded into cars from the platforms of the factory, could be forwarded without change to every quarter of the continent. All needed materials, to the smallest detail, entered the factory in their raw forms, and passed out as finished product, delicately adjusted machines ready for immediate use. The imagination bounds to the conception of the miraculous ingenuity of instruments, and the trained skill of operatives, and the shrewd co-ordination of labor, and, above all, the marvellous captaincy by which all this differentiation is systematized and is ordered and directed to the effective achievement of its ends.

The large, well-ventilated rooms, comfortably warmed in winter and admirably supplied with the means of light and air, are a part of the general efficacy of the system, and the untiring dexterity of the men gives to it its strongly human interest. There is a fascination in their movements which determines the quality of the attractiveness of the whole. You see no feverish haste in the speed with which they work, but rather the even, smooth, unfaltering sureness which is the charm of mastery, and which must be attended by its satisfaction as well.

I witnessed this with delight among the men with whom I lived. Conversation at our meals was nearly always of shop; at dinner and supper especially we discussed the details of the day's work. Several of us were employed at constructing binders. Albert was of that number. He was making but little more than the wage of common labor when I first knew him, but his income began to increase with his increasing efficiency, and it was a matter of great, vital interest to us all to hear his reports each day, as he told of a fraction of a binder and then of a whole one in advance upon his previous work, until his daily earnings rose to two dollars and a half, which was accepted in his department as the normal sum.

Besides these elements of personal interest in piece-work as a scheme of labor and the gratification of the sense of effective workmanship, there entered here the stimulus of ambition based upon excellent chances of promotion. The factory-system of production creates strong demand for manual skill, and stronger still for the capacity of administration and control. Why the realization of these facts did not possess more thoroughly the minds of the common laborers, I could not understand. They were strangely impervious to their force, for nothing could have been more noticeable than the alertness of the managing staff in watching for evidences of unusual ability among the men. It was not at all uncommon for a hand who had been taken on as a day-laborer to be promoted, as a result of his intelligence and industry, to some department of piece-work. Nearly every foreman in the factory is said to have begun far down the scale, and Barry's account of the career of the assistant manager I have heard confirmed.

During my short stay I was actually witness to the progress of two men who came in as day-laborers, the young Englishman from Jamaica and a stalwart, handsome Swede who secured a job and joined us at the boarding-house about a fortnight ago. Clarence earned a promotion and got it at the time of my coming to the factory, and I have seen Albert's rise from a position removed by very little from that of unskilled labor to that of a workman whose skill commands the sum of fifteen dollars a week. Dennis is a type of craftsman whose future it is not difficult to predict. Conscientious and industrious and persevering, endowed with rare ability and real capacity for work, his progress seems assured, and a well-paid, authoritative position an ultimate logical certainty.

All these are of the best class of factory-workers that I came to know. There are other classes quite as clearly defined, and most of them have their representatives about our table. Men, for example, who have an honest interest in their work as such, and who have risen by force of ambition and sheer development of manual skill to good positions in the factory, and have there stood still, their congenital qualities incapable, presumably, of higher efficiency. But sadder far than theirs is the case of men who are often best endowed with native cleverness and aptitude, who rise quickly in the scale of promotion, and who might rise far higher than they do but for the curse of their careless living. They know no interest in their work nor pleasure in its doing. To them it is the sordid drudgery by which they gain the means of gratifying their real purposes and desires. With sullen perseverance they endure the torment of labor, with pay-day in view and then Saturday night and Sunday with their mad revels in what they call life. The future is a meaningless word, with no claim upon them beyond the prospect that it holds of more indulgence; the present is their sole concern, and only with reference to what it can be made to yield to ruling passions.

From some phase of this last attitude to life none of the men whom I knew personally seemed to be entirely free. There is no improvidence like the improvidence of the poor. Doubtless there is no thrift like theirs, but among these young men, with all of life before them, their reckless prodigality in money-matters assumed at times an appalling nature. Some of them made no pretence of saving anything, and the few who did save would show at times an audacity of extravagance to match with the wastefulness of the worst. They were not a drinking set in any sense of excessive indulgence, for not one of them had the reputation of a drunkard, and their spending was much of it in comparatively innocent channels, but it was monstrous in relation to their means and to their prospects in the world.

A perfectly well-recognized philosophy justified it to their minds.

"We'll never be young but once," they would say, "and if we don't have a good time now, we never will."

A good time was often secured at enormous cost. I do not know whether it is the habitual dissipation, or whether it happens to be the vogue for this winter, but it is very certain that to the men here the fancy-dress ball is now the incomparable attraction. One or more such functions within their range falls on nearly every Saturday night. They are given for the most part by certain "Brotherhoods" and labor organizations, and they are free, apparently, to all who come dressed in a manner sufficiently "fancy" to meet the views of "the committee," and pay the price of a ticket, which admits "self and lady."

As the men saw the night approaching, their talk would turn more and more to the absorbing subjects of costume and the girls whom they meant to take with them. There are shops which do business at letting out ready-made disguises for such occasions, and I have repeatedly seen these hard-working industrious fellows go deep into their pockets, to the extent even of half a week's pay, for the use for a few hours of some tawdry make-up of velvet and spangles and lace, which reeked with promiscuous wear. And the outlay did not end with dress, for there remained tickets of admission, and the cost of at least two suppers for each and of not a little drinking. It was exceptional for any one of them to come home drunk, and the man who did was sure of a course of steady bantering for days, but some drinking was the rule for the Saturday nights that were given to masquerade. When a play would fall in place in the order of amusement, the men were sure to return by midnight, and there was always then less evidence of drink.

All forms of public gayety seemed scrupulously confined to Saturday nights and Sundays. The men could not have been more punctual at their work, and the habitual week-day evening was the far from exciting one in Mrs. Schulz's sitting-room, which I have described. There they regularly gathered after supper, and smoked, and romped with the children, and played cards, and read. I was usually off for bed by eight o'clock, for nothing less than ten hours of sleep would fit me for the ten hours of labor in the factory, and the others would follow an hour or two later.

The morning brought the unwelcome summons to get up in what seemed the dead of night and but an hour or two after the time of going to bed. Cold water would have its rousing effect, as, also, a breakfast by lamplight with an anxious eye on the clock, and then a rush through the sharp air of the morning twilight until you were caught in the living stream which poured through the factory-gate. Work was begun on the minute, and your ear caught the sharp metallic clink of the mowers as the workmen pushed the frames down the loading-platforms to the cars. Even within the brick enclosures and in the stinging cold of the winter air, there arose inevitably with the sound the association of meadows fragrant with the perfume of new-mown timothy and clover drying in the hazy warmth of a long summer afternoon.

Within the buildings, almost in a moment, would rise the turmoil of production. You heard the deafening uproar of far-reaching machinery, as, with wheels whirling in dizzy motion and the straps humming in their flight, it beat time in deep, low throbs to the remorseless measures of a tireless energy. Cleaving the tumult of the sounding air you heard at frequent intervals the buzz-saws as they bit hard with flying teeth into multiple layers of wood, rising to piercing crescendo and then dying away in a sob. There was the din of many hammers, and over the wooden floors and along the run-ways, and through the dark, damp passages of the warehouses, and down the deep vistas of the covered platforms, was the almost constant rumble of hand-trucks pushed by men and boys.

All this unceasingly for five continuous hours, which always seem unending, and then the abrupt signal for twelve o'clock, and the sound of the machinery running down while the men are hastening to their mid-day meal. About the factory-gate are always at this hour groups of women and young children who have brought in pails and baskets hot dinners for their men. On brighter days you can see long lines of operatives sitting along the curbs or with their backs against the high board fence, basking in the sunlight, as they eat their dinners in the open air and converse among themselves and with their wives or children.

Then back to your place in the afternoon while the machinery is slowly working up to its accustomed pace and the men about you reassembling to take up again, on the stroke of the hour, the work of the afternoon. Five more hours of the thundering rush of factory-labor follow, and you leave the gate at night almost too tired to walk. A wash is first in your recovery, and it rests you more than would sleep. Then supper brings its deep satisfaction and a smoke its peaceful content, and you go to bed better off by a day's wages.

CHAPTER V

AMONG THE REVOLUTIONARIES

No. — Sangamon Street, Chicago, Ill.,
February 27, 1892.

Again I am in the army of the unemployed, and have been there for the past three weeks and more, but on other than the terms of my first experience in Chicago. I have been looking for work and testing many phases of this lurid life of enforced idleness, but with a wide difference from the original venture here. My savings from wages earned in the factory have put me on quite another footing. The room in which I am writing has been an adequate shelter, and I have paid for it only one dollar and a half a week. Odd jobs have helped me often in the matter of securing food, and, when these failed, I have had my dwindling store of savings to fall back upon; and I have a not inconsiderable knowledge of the cheap eating-houses of the town.

All through my time of service in the factory, I saved scrupulously. A wage of nine dollars a week held out a hopeful prospect as the result of seven weeks of labor. I did not miss even a fraction of a working day, and so the total of my earnings would have reached sixty-three dollars but for the unfortunate fact that, besides Sundays, there fell two holidays within the limits of that period. On Christmas and New Year's Day the factory was closed, and I found, to my surprise, that holidays, which I should have supposed were joyously welcome to all the world, are really of very doubtful blessedness to the vast number of workers who are paid for the actual amount accomplished, and by the detailed reckoning of time. I lost three dollars in hard cash by Christmas Day and that of the New Year, while my living expenses were uninterrupted; and three dollars would pay for two weeks of comfortable housing from the cruelties of this inclement life.

It was three weeks before I could get appreciably ahead in the matter of saving. Nearly all the first instalment of my wages was already due for board, and a bill for washing cut deep into the small remainder. A pair of shoes was an absolute necessity at the end of the next week, for I was going about almost barefooted, and some other articles of clothing were equally requisite. And so my wages for week by week together were already mortgaged to nearly the last penny before I had actually earned them. But at last the materials of a fairly respectable appearance had been secured, and then, out of the wages of the last four weeks of factory work, I managed, by closest economy, to save seventeen dollars and a half.

Gradation in respectability in the matter of dress, from the point at which a man is unmistakably in his working-clothes to that in which he readily passes as a workman in his Sunday best, has furnished the means of some range in the experiment of church-going. From the first I have gone regularly to church. But appearing in the garb of a day-laborer in the fashionable churches of a great city is far removed as a matter of experience from attending the service of a village meeting-house. I am inclined to think that the latter would be the greater ordeal to a real workman. Country parishioners turn out on Sundays with an amazing show of dress, and one of their own number in flannel shirt and labor-stained clothing would be oddly conspicuous; and he would feel his peculiarity much more, I imagine, than if he found himself among persons whom he did not know on equal social footing. For me the case was different and was wholly artificial, but in going to church in the country, dressed in working clothes which had been carefully protected by overalls, and mended, and brushed, and cleaned to the utmost, I yet could but feel how intolerable to a workingman the actual situation would have been. To slip early into a quiet corner of the village church which was usually free, and then out again before most of the congregation had well started for the door, was a widely dissimilar thing from regularly attending service with your neighbors.

In overalls and a "jumper," a man is easily classified; without them, however plain may be the stamp upon him of attempted cleanliness, it is difficult to place him among a Sunday-dressed community, whether in the country or in town, unless he, too, is evidently in Sunday clothes. It is not, in its general application, a question of fashion; the cut of a man's garments may be that of ten years back, or may be foreign to any fashion known, but his clothing must not bear the marks of toil, and must have the linen accompaniments which render, while they are worn, all manual labor difficult. If he would conform, a man must never worship in garments in which he could work.

A want of conformity might quite possibly expose him to aggressive criticism and ridicule among his accustomed fellows. I never found it so myself in the country, where I always went to church in working clothes because I had no others, for never once was I made to feel the least embarrassment, while many times I wondered at the gracious courtesy which met me. But I was always a stranger, and had never to face companions of long standing. And so, as in many phases of my experiment, the unreality of my position marred, in large measure, the value of the result.

In Chicago, however, the circumstances were not so clearly against me, and they served to give to my own experience something of a normal character. In entering a church door on Sunday mornings, I was objectively in no other station than that of any workingman who may have wished to worship there. The treatment which I received is, therefore, a fair gauge of the reception which another worker might expect.

If it were a single instance I should not mention it, and I venture to offer no generalization, although I am speaking of tests which covered many Sundays and included all the principal churches of the town. All that can be said, I think, is that the uniformity of result is some evidence of what a like-conditioned workingman might count upon in the way of treatment at the hands of fashionable churches.

I was sure, in the first venture or two, that the circumstances were exceptional, and that I had chanced upon churches which, although most evidently of the rich, were yet watchful for every opportunity of welcoming the poor. It was not until I had made the rounds of many churches of many denominations that I realized how general and how sincere among them is the spirit of hospitality to the working poor.

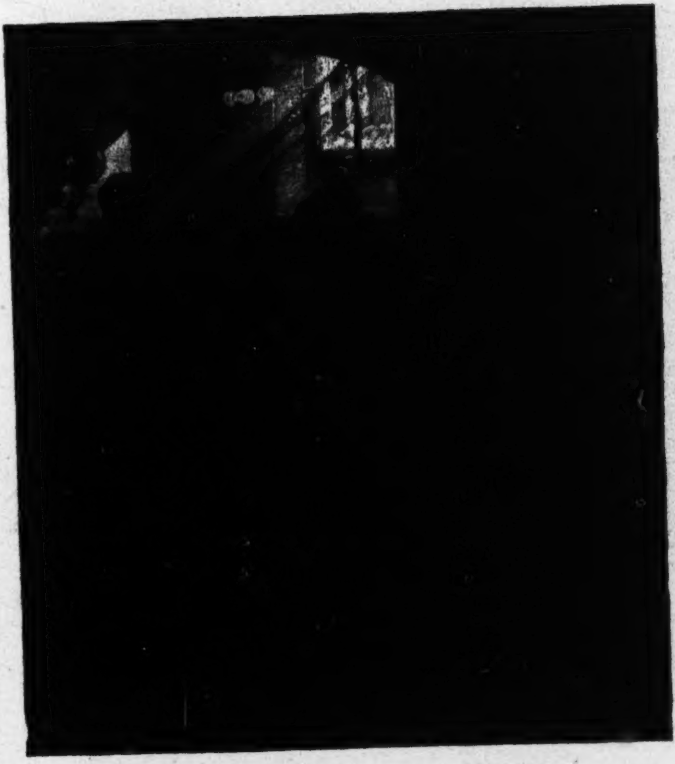
In the vestibules, I always found young men who acted as ushers, and who were charged with the duty of receiving strangers. Never once did I fail of a friendly greeting. With every test I felt increasingly the difficulties of the situation for these young men, and my wonder grew at their graceful tactfulness. A touch of the patronizing in their tone or manner would have changed the welcome to an insult, and any marked effusiveness of cordiality would have robbed it as effectually of all virtue. It was the golden mean of a man's friendly recognition of his fellow-man, with no regard for difference in social standing, which was the course so successfully followed by these young ushers.

I had always to avoid a more desirable seat by particularly asking for one far to the rear. And in the pews there was no withdrawing of skirts, nor were there other signs of objection to me as a fellow-worshipper. On the contrary, a hymnal, or a prayer-book would be promptly offered, and sometimes shared; and, at the service-end, a cordial invitation to come again would often follow me from the pew-door, although frequently I noticed that I was conspicuously lonely as a representative of the poor.

How natural it was and how inevitable that the poor should not be there shone clear as day the moment that I regarded the matter from the subjective attitude of a genuine worker.

From their status as citizens in a free land, American workingmen have acquired, together with the sense of individual freedom, the quality, in very marked degree, of self-respect. It exhibits itself sometimes in highly contradictory fashion, for it is sensitive and jealous in the making; but self-respect is none the less a fundamental characteristic.

Besides Dennis and three others, who were Roman Catholics, the men at Mrs. Schulz's boarding-house did not go to church. In talking with them I discovered that all had been more or less in the habit of church-going in their country homes, but that the habit had dropped completely from them upon coming to live in town. The case was perfectly apparent. The mere suggestion of a mission church was insulting to them, and, from the new idea of churches for the rich, they had learned their first lesson in class dis-



NEVER ONCE DID I FAIL OF A FRIENDLY GREETING.

tinctions. Every feature of such a church, its richly dressed occupants in their high-priced pews, and the general atmosphere of merely social superiority, would have inflicted upon these men, in spite of a cordial welcome, as deep a wound to their self-respect as they would have felt in being decoyed to a formal reception in a lady's drawing-room. To them, the latter function could not be more obviously intended for another class than theirs.

One night, before I left the factory, Albert spoke his mind to me on the subject with much freedom. Several times I had asked him to come with me to church, and on this particular Saturday evening I spoke of a preacher whom I hoped to hear in the morning, and who, I urged, would surely interest him.

"Look here, John," he said, finally, "it's all right you asking me to go to church, but I ain't going. I used to go regular when I lived to home, although I ain't no church-member. It was different out there, for most everybody went and chipped in what they could, and everybody sat where they liked, and it wasn't one man's church more than another's. You go to church if you like. That's your own business. But I ain't going to no one-horse mission chapel that the rich has put up so they won't be bothered with the poor in their own churches. You say they treat you well when you go to church on Michigan Avenue. I don't doubt it. What reason would they have for not treating you well? But, all the the same, they take you in for charity, for you couldn't pay for a seat in one of them churches. No, sir, the rich folks build their churches for themselves, and they keep them up for themselves, and I ain't never going to interfere with that arrangement. I don't mind going to the meetings of the Association once in awhile, for there's fellows of your own kind there, and you hear some good speaking and singing. I ain't got much use even for that, for it's only a side-show that's run mostly by the rich, but I ain't got no use at all for your churches."

Nevertheless, on the whole, I was sorry the next morning that Albert was not with me. There were moments when I did not regret it, but the sermon, for all its strange setting, was one which could scarcely have failed to impress him.

After a seven o'clock breakfast, which seemed luxuriously late, and which Dennis and I shared alone on Sunday mornings, I set out as usual for the South Side. It was five miles to my destination in that section of the city, and I always walked both ways, for sometimes I had not the fare, and, in any case, ten cents saved was no mean item in a careful account of possible economy.

The Sundays of my term of service in the factory were, for the most part, splendid winter days, and this was of the best. No snow lay on the ground, no winter wind stirred the dust in the long, quiet streets, and clear from out the cloudless sky came the glowing rays of the sun, tempering the cold air to the exquisite delicacy of reviving warmth wherein you catch your breath with wonder, so charged is it with the mystery of the coming spring. Walking, on such a day, is of the essence of delight. Some measure of bodily exercise is needed to keep one warm, and this forth-faring on a holiday, free from the necessity of labor, which begins almost with the dawn of consciousness after sleep and ends only as the night of sleep closes down upon one, is a form of pleasure which life does not often match.

The spell of it bore me company through the factory region, and where there opened to my view mile after mile of lumber-yards, with unsightly piles of seasoning timber stretching away to where the vessels lie in the canals which are fed from the river, and there rise the gaunt bulks of towering elevators, and the tall chimneys that everywhere send forth their ceaseless volumes of black smoke. All this was eloquent of work, and wages, and the means of decent living, and it therefore had a beauty which will not be denied to it by one who knows something of the misery of the unemployed. Even the grotesque ugliness of the long lines of buildings, as I entered the closely built-up sections of the town, could not rob me of the comforting sense of shelter and much legitimate business among the well-paid working poor.

But, before crossing thence to the South Side, there remains a belt through which even the stanchest optimism on its way to church on a bright Sunday morning could scarcely pass without misgivings. A varying foreign population, chiefly from southern and eastern Europe, thickens here to a point of incredible crowding, and sweat-shops abound, and cheap bakeries, and there is a marked increase in the number of pawn-shops and saloons.

The crowds in the streets had been in Sunday dress thus far for the most part, and were evidently on the way to mass or just returning. Many children were among them, uniformly well-booted and dressed, and here and there appeared the white veil and crowning flowers of a first communion.

There was no sharp transition to a region which knows no Sunday, for everywhere were the outward symbols of the day in closed shops, and streets free from the noise of traffic, and the presence of holiday garments; and yet more obvious on every hand became now the evidences of a poverty which finds no day of rest. The unemployed, in the uniform of rags, were loafing on the streets—the long, relentless waiting which is an honest workman's torment until he finds employment, or loses hope and self-respect, when it becomes his sure destruction. Children who have scant knowledge of clean water or clean clothes were playing in the unclean streets, or emerging from the "family entrances" of saloons with pitchers or tin-pails of beer, destined for rooms swarming with workers whose labor never ceases, except for a few hours each night, unless there comes the calamity of no work at even a bare-living rate.

It was the age-old picture of the lot of the very poor, which alters not with the varying fortune of the State. "The old order changeth, yielding place to new," one epoch of society merges into another, and the lives of men are lived on other planes; but there is a constant quantity in it all at the point where the pressure upon the limits of subsistence is the strongest, and the weakest, driven to the wall, live from hand to mouth in squalid wretchedness.

How familiar to our day has the picture come to be of children who breathe moral death with every breath they draw, and grow up to certain crime and shamelessness from out the haggard struggle for daily bread in sordid attics where disease is born in reeking filth and in warrens of beastly incest! Familiarity with it breeds no contempt, but rather a wondering recognition of the touch of better nature which reveals itself—the shouts of true delight from children hard at play; their rapt absorption in the game, an ecstasy in which all the hidden beauty of their faces is disclosed; the loving tending of a plant that grows in the fetid air of a working-chamber; and, more than all, the unfailing miracle of ministry, wherein the poor, out of cramping penury, relieve the grimmer needs of yet poorer brethren.

Once through the belt, and over a narrow river which flows black with the noisome sewage of the city, and past the region of unceasing railway traffic, and through the chilling gloom of streets which are like sunless caverns between sheer walls of stone, almost a single step in an eastward walk brought to sudden view the revelation of new order. A long, wide avenue, bathed in winter sunlight, lay radiant from polished windows and the garnished pavements of all its length. Glimpses were had of an inland sea which reflected, as from clearest crystal, the infinite serenity of unclouded skies. Down the far extent of the thoroughfare, blending into indistinguishable unity in distant, gleaming haze, were homes where, in quiet and comfort, some in high refinement and some in barbaric splendor, live the strong of their generation, working out life's fateful ends.

It was down this avenue that I passed on the way to church. An outward calm, as of perfect peace, possessed it. There was no hint of hunger there, nor of the cruel need which eats into the living souls of men until it devours them or leaves them maimed and stunted of their rightful growth. Plethora here took the place of want. Then quickly came the sense of excess, with its end in sad satiety, and hard upon the sight of lavish luxury followed the impression of a world of men seeking at any cost to hedge themselves with unstinted plenty from all sight and knowledge of their kindred who know but little relief from pangs of plague and famine.

Among the first to enter it, I walked up the steps of a large stone church and into an inviting vestibule. Several young men were grouped in conversation between the inner doors, and the one who first marked my entrance stepped out at once to meet me. A little painfully regardful of his dress, he yet was frank and cordial, and the ease with which he greeted me could not have become him better had he spent his life in leading workingmen up the aisles of rich churches.

"I have a seat well up on this side, where you can hear perfectly," he suggested, looking me full in the eyes, as we stood for a moment at the door. "May I show you to that?"

"I should like to sit here if I may," I said, and I pointed to the corner of the first seat from the wall.

"I am sorry," he answered, "but that seat is reserved for an old gentleman who has occupied it for years, and who always prefers to sit there. Would you mind taking the seat just in front of it?"

"Certainly not," I said. "That will suit me quite as well," and I sat myself down in the place in question.

Not half a dozen persons were in the building, and its restful quiet was unbroken even by the prelude from the organ. Two ladies in deep mourning entered now, in the company of the church treasurer. It appeared, from their conversation, that they had met him by appointment; and, although they were speaking in low tones, yet they stood so near me that I could not help overhearing what they said.

The point in discussion among them related to a pew, and the treasurer politely pointed out a small one not far from where I sat, which was at their service for two hundred dollars a year, and also two sittings farther to the front, which they might have on the same terms. There was much considering of the *pros* and *cons* of this alternative, and, incidentally, the treasurer indicated the range of prices in the pews, from two hundred dollars near the door to sixteen hundred where seats were most in demand.

In growing numbers the congregation was assembling, and above the gentle breathing of the organ, which began to spread in soothing waves of prayerful music through the church, rose the soft rustle of rich dress, and the air, glowing with deep colors from stained glass, took on a subtle perfume.

When the pews were dense with worshippers, scarcely a vacant seat remaining, and my closest watchfulness had failed to note the presence of a single other person of my class, there broke faintly on the waiting company the clear, uplifting sweetness of a rare contralto voice. Vague and lightly stirring at the first, as when some deeply buried feeling, recalled to life, gives utterance to new being in "the language of a cry," it rose to ever fuller power, unfaltering and pure in every tone, until it smote with the touch of truth each silent chord of life and waked them all to perfect harmony, wherein they sing the mystic unity of things, where the senses mix and whence they radiate, and where,

> . . . in the midmost heart of grief
> Our passions clasp a secret joy.

I was not present, however, merely as a worshipper, but also as a member of my chosen order. I tried to see with their eyes, and then to think their thoughts and feel their emotions. When I held myself honestly to this task, with the aid of what I had learned directly from the men and caught of their ways of thinking, it was another revulsion of feeling which set in.

I thought of my nine dollars a week, and of the meagre pittance which resulted from utmost care in saving, even when my own support was the only claim upon me, and how far beyond my reach was all possibility of a seat in the pews which were held for barter. The image of Mrs. Schulz rose up to me, worn, and wan, and almost ill, yet always cheerful, and I remembered the patient, unflinching courage with which she faced the obligations of her life, and the heart-breaking economies by which she must meet many of its duties. On that very day, the two older children had gone at different hours to church, because there was but one pair of shoes and stockings between them, and Mrs. Schulz herself went out to mass, through the tingling cold of the early morning, in clothing which would have been light for summer.

While here, on every hand, was dress whose cost, as indicating not warmth and comfort but mere conformity to changing fashion, represented, in scores of cases, more of annual individual expenditure than the whole net income of many a workman's family. And even more poignant to a mind made sensitive by this train of thought was the impression which weighed upon it of a company well-fed to a degree of comfort beyond the sense of sympathy with hunger that rarely learns the meaning of enough. The mere suggestion of a breakfast of rich food in wide variety, and served often at great cost in almost wasteful plenty, to be followed soon after the hour of worship by another meal yet more varied, and abundant, and rich, seemed the very pitch of heartless mockery, in the full presence almost of hundreds of men and women to whom bare day's bread is an agony of anxious seeking, and of multitudes of little children to whom, not nourishing food alone but even food enough to stay the pangs of hunger, is a luxury.

These familiar feelings, roused, as always, by the common contrasts of life, which one follows in close study through the bewildering complexities of casual relations, were dominant, from the new point of view, as the outcome of patent facts. Superficial and undiscriminating, and yet most real and living, is the thought of the actual workman, as his mind responds to the obvious leading of the things he sees. I was glad at this point that Albert was not with me. A few minutes later I deeply regretted his absence.

The minister had begun his sermon. I scarcely heard the opening sentences, so oppressed was my mind with the workman's sense of the ruthless Philistinism of this phase of modern Christianity. It was the preacher's tone which first attracted me. There was quiet in it and a great reserve, and he spoke as a pastor who holds earnest conversation with his flock. I was all attention in a moment, and I saw that I listened to a man who knew his fellow-men, and whose words made strong appeal to their intelligence.

It was as though he spoke from a heart well-nigh broken with personal grief, but chastened to new love and truth, and tenderness, by the sorrow which it had borne.

He was speaking of the needs of men, and through his thoughts there breathed a knowledge of the *Weltschmerz* of to-day, and deep sympathy with it. There was no weak ignoring of the difficulties of honest doubt, and no false claims for the basis of belief; and, when he spoke of the awful suffering of our time, his words were true to the high dignity of man through the infinite consequences of free choice in his life upon the earth. His appeal was no emotional blending of the false and true, wherewith to blind men's eyes to the eternal verities, and to cause to rest lightly upon comfortable consciences the sense of personal responsibility for one's fellows, but rather the sure claim of clear conviction which comes from out the facts of daily life seen in the light of their true meaning.

The effect upon his hearers was unmistakable. I was unaware of it for a time, so engrossed was I in the speaker's words, and in the strongly human personality of the man, but by degrees I awoke to the fact that all about me were listeners as eagerly intent as I. The sense of hardened, pampered, Philistinism gave way before the overwhelming consciousness of a sympathetic unity of thought and feeling. Indifferent to the vital needs of the world and to the pressing problems of its life? No emotion could have been farther from these men and women, the intensity of whose interest could be felt in almost an agony of breathless attention to the sober truthfulness of the minister. The very stillness was charged with mute appeal for guidance from hearts wrung with the hurt of the world and pleading for some useful outlet to the tide of generous feeling. It was as though distress had ceased to be for them the visible sufferings of the poor, and had grown, through the deepening sense of brotherhood, into an anguish of their own, which must find healing in forms of effective helpfulness. Very clearly dawned the conviction that, if one could but point out to the members of this waiting company some "way," "something to do," which would square well with their practical business sense of things, instant and unmeasured would be their response for the furthering of an end which would work them such glad relief!

From the church my destination was the meeting of the Socialists. But not immediately, for I stopped on the way at the well-known haunt in Madison Street for the usual Sunday dinner.

By this time I had attended several of the Socialists' meetings, and had come to know personally a number of the members of the order, and I was not surprised, upon taking a seat in the restaurant, to catch sight of three Socialists who were nodding pleasantly to me from a neighboring table. One was the broad-minded Pedler, whose good impression made in the first speech of his which I had heard was heightened by all my later knowledge of him. Another I had learned to know as a near approach to my original preconception of a revolutionary. He was a Communistic Anarchist, and just what peculiar variation of individual belief it was which led him to ally himself with the Socialists I could never make clearly out.

It puzzled me not a little; for, by this time I had thoroughly in mind the fundamental fact that Socialism and Anarchy, as two schools of social doctrine, are at the very poles of hostile opposition to each other. And, if I may judge from the little that I have seen and heard between them, the vituperative heat of their controversies is equalled only by the warmth and malignancy which has marked the history of theological debate.

I soon learned that Socialist and Anarchist are not interchangeable terms, to be used with light indifference in describing the general advocate of revolution against established order. Indeed, to my great surprise, I found that a policy of active, aggressive revolution among these men had almost no adherents. Certainly none among the Socialists, for they repudiated the bare suggestion of violence as being wholly inadequate and absurd, and pinned their faith instead to what they called the "natural processes of evolution." These, to their belief, would, in any case, work out the appointed ends with men, but their operation could be stimulated by education, they said, and helped on by organized effort toward the achievement of manifest destiny in the highly centralized and perfected order which is to result from the common ownership and administration by all the people of all land and capital used in production and distribution, for the common good of all.

And even among the Anarchists the upholders of a policy of bloody revolt against social order were rare. Most of those whom I came to know were distinctly of a metaphysical turn of mind. It was easy to trace their intellectual kinship with the Physiocrats of the last century, in their implicit confidence in the universal efficacy of *laissez faire.* Their views, reduced to simplest terms, seemed to take the form of the epigram—that "the cure for the evils of freedom is more freedom." The removal of all artificial restraint in the form of man-made laws would result eventually, to their thinking, in a society as natural and as wholesome as is all physical order, which is the exact resultant of the free play of natural law.

It was the Socialist's conception of a highly centralized administration which drove the Anarchist into a frenzy of vehement antagonism. And it was the Anarchist's *laissez faire* ideal which roused the latent fighting-spirit of the Socialist. The Anarchist would maintain with stout conviction that centralized administration is already the core of the malady of the world, and that our need is for freedom in the absence of artificial limitations wherein natural forces can work their rightful ends. And the Socialist would retort, with rising anger, that it is from anarchy—the absence of wisely regulated system—that the world even now suffers most, and that the hope of men lies in the orderly management of their own affairs in the interests of all, and in the light of the revelations of science. They were heartily at one in their dislike for what they were fond of calling the present "*bourgeois* society," and for the existing rights of private property, which they regarded as its chiefest bulwark, but they parted company at once, and with sharp recriminations, on the grounds of their dislike, and of their purposes and hopes for a regenerated state of things.

Such Anarchists were of the "Individualistic" type. Not all of those I met were so philosophical, however. The Communistic one, who was nodding at me in a friendly manner from a near table, notably was not. Very much the reverse. He was for open revolution to the death, and he made no secret of it. He had little patience for the slow pace of evolution believed in by the Socialists, but he had less, apparently, for the *laissez faire* conception of his brother Anarchists. At all events, I found him most commonly in the meetings of the former sect, where his revolutionary views were frowned down, but his invectives against society were tolerated in a spirit of free speech, and as being warranted by the evils of the existing state.

He was a German, of tall, muscular frame, erect, square-shouldered, well-poised, as a result of long service, most bitterly against his will, in the Prussian Army, and he hated kings and potentates and all governmental authority, with a burning hatred. His was the broad-featured likeness of his race, and his stiff, fair hair was brushed back in straight lines from a well-shaped forehead, while his beard, brown and streaked with white, bristled from his lower face like the bayonets of a square in full formation. He was a mechanic by trade, and a good one, as I had happened to learn.

The last of the three, like the Pedler, was a Socialist, but was very unlike his two companions

HE HATED KINGS AND POTENTATES AND ALL GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY.

as a man. My acquaintance among the Socialists had not gone far before I began to observe that I was meeting men who, whatever their mental vagaries, were craftsmen of no mean order. They were machinists and skilled workmen mostly, and some were workers in sweat-shops. All of them had known the full stress of the struggle for bread, but they were decidedly not the inefficients of their class, having fought their way to positions of some advantage in the general fight.

Here, however, was an exception in this third "comrade," and I marvelled at the rarity of his type. Incompetence was stamped on every feature. His long, lank, flabby figure, with its disjointed movements, suggested no virility. The hair grew thin and blonde from his head and from his colorless face, and his large, pale-blue eyes flitted in their movements, as though there were behind them not intelligence enough to hold them in fixed attention. The man's emotions were boundless. He had, moreover, a gift of utterance, and, when he spoke in meeting, it was sheer feeling that expressed itself in words which were marvellously void of any sane concatenation. It was a psychological phenomenon, this public speech of his. We had premonitory warnings of it, for we could see him writhing in his seat when his emotions were aroused, and starting nervously until he had gained the floor, when a half-suppressed, general groan would greet the torrent of his sentences, which flowed directly from chaotic feeling which had never reached his mind.

We four left the restaurant together, and walked on to Waverley Hall. I fell in with the Pedler, and from him I was glad to learn that the Poet was to read that afternoon his long-deferred paper on the "Opening of the Exposition Grounds on Sunday."

It was a little before the appointed hour when we reached the hall, but already there was promise of an uncommon meeting. The audience was larger than usual, the benches on both sides of the central aisle being well filled nearly to the door. The Pedler and I had some difficulty in finding seats near the front. More than ever marked was the atmosphere of keen alertness, which, from the first, had so attracted me in the gatherings of the Socialists. They might be futile, but their meetings were never dull. And, while they could not have been more orderly, they might easily have proved far less engaging than they were, had a saving sense of humor been more conspicuously a characteristic of the members.

There was a sense of pleasurable excitement in sinking back into my seat, whence, by turning a little to the right, I could command the hall. The afternoon sun was streaming through the two large windows in the south end. The heavy draperies, looped up to admit the light, were in perfect keeping with the carpet on the daïs and the pulpit chairs upholstered with plush, on one of which sat the Leader, behind a reading-desk. There were other paraphernalia of the Masonic lodge which habitually held its meetings there, and among the life-sized portraits on the walls was one of Washington in the full regalia of a Mason. At small wooden tables, resting on the floor at the Leader's right, sat a few young reporters, sharpening their pencils in preparation for any points which could be turned to good account as " copy."

To the pleasure of excited interest was added the ease of some familiarity, for, besides the heads of meeting, I recognized among the gathering company the faces of *habitués*. In a seat across the aisle the Poet sat in earnest conversation with the Citizeness, holding fast a roll of manuscript in both hands. And at the end of the bench behind them was a young man who interested me far more than any of the Socialists whom I had met. A long black overcoat of cheap material concealed his work-worn garments to the knees, and his hands, dark with the dye of clothing, lay folded in his lap. His face showed faintly the marks of Jewish origin, and, although he was full three-and-twenty, he bore a strange resemblance to the Christ-child in Hoffmann's picture of "Jesus among the Doctors in the Temple."

Quite oblivious to what was passing about him, he sat in his usual mood, with an expression of much serenity on his pale face, and his great, dark, luminous eyes glowing with the ardor of his thought.

I have never lost the first impression which he made upon me; it was in one of these meetings, when an idle slur had been cast upon his race and the Leader had given him an opportunity to reply. He rose modestly to his feet, and from the first my attention was riveted by the convincing quality in his rich, deep voice. Without a word of cheap rejoinder, he simply restated the issues of debate in clear, incisive sentences, which seemed to gather force from their broken English, until he had shown the entire irrelevance of the insulting charge, even had it been true.

I had waited for him on that afternoon at the meeting's end, and we began an acquaintance which to me has been of great value. It is easy to predict for such a man an eventual escape from the bondage of a sweat-shop, but, inasmuch as he has been held in slavery to that work from his earliest infant memories of a crowded den in Poland, where he was born, I feel some measure of justice in naming him "The Victim."

Promptly on the hour the Leader called the meeting to order, and introduced the Poet, whose paper presented the topic of the day's debate. In a few moments we were all following in close attention the ready flow of the poet's voice as it passed with clear articulation over the well-chosen words of his introductory sentences. There was admirable precision in the statement of the case at issue, and we were bracing ourselves with pleasure for the logical sequences of detailed discussion, when, to our surprise, the Poet broke abruptly from all judicial treatment of his theme. At a single leap, he took the ground that certainly the Exposition should be accessible every day—that its opening on Sundays was not a subject for debate.

Then there followed a storm of hot invective. Christianity was assailed as the giant superstition of historic civilization, still, daring, to the shame of high intelligence, to hold its fetich head aloft in the light of modern science. Its ministers were attacked as sycophantic parasites, whose only motive, in urging the closing of the Fair on Sundays, was the fear of the spread among working people of that enlightenment which will achieve the overthrow of capitalistic society and with it the tottering structure of the Church. Most of all, his bitterness spent itself upon these "blind leaders of the blind," as he called them, who will not themselves enter into a knowledge of a better state nor suffer others to enter it, and who grievously break the law of rest on Sundays in befooling their fellow-men, and then live through the remaining days in luxurious unproductiveness upon the labor of their dupes.

What was coming next we could not guess, and it seemed a long cry to any shout of exultation from all this, but he accomplished it with facility, for his paper closed with a peroration, wherein he rose to fervid panegyric upon the increasing intellectual emancipation of workingmen. The Romish Church, he said, keeps many of them in bondage yet, but the Protestant organizations have all but lost their hold upon them; and the widening gulf between the two great classes in society has left these churches in the nakedness of their true character, as mere centres of the social life of the very rich and of the upper *bourgeoisie*, and as a prop to the social order from which these idle classes so richly profit, at the merciless cost of the wage-earners.

Instantly this was accepted as the dominant note of the meeting. The applause which greeted it was genuine and prolonged. With light-hearted disregard of the subject appointed for debate, men began ardently to speak to this new theme: Modern Christianity a vast hypocrisy—a cloak made use of by vested interest to conceal from the common people the real nature of the grounds on which it stands.

But for the masterly qualities of the Leader, who held the meeting to strict parliamentary order, it might have degenerated into a mob. Men were crowding one another in their desire to gain the floor, but not for a moment was the peaceful conduct of the gathering disturbed. With accurate knowledge of the shades of social belief there represented and of the personalities of the men, the Leader chose for recognition with discriminating justice.

At one moment an American workman was speaking, a Socialist of the general school of Social Democracy. There was self-respecting dignity about him and a calm reserve as he began.

The Christian Church served as well as any institution of the capitalistic order, he said, to measure the growing cleavage between the classes in society. But, to his mind, the paper of the afternoon had emphasized unnecessarily the existence of the *bourgeoisie;* for, economically considered, there is no longer a middle-class to be reckoned with in vital questions. There remain simply the capitalists and the proletarians. The old middle-class, which had made its living by individual enterprise, was fast being forced (by the play of natural laws, which showed themselves in the increasing centralization of capital) out of the possibility of successful competition with aggregated wealth, and down, for the most part, to the level of those who can bring to production, not land nor capital, but merely their native qualities of physical strength, or manual skill, or mental ability—proletarians, all of them, whether manual or intellectual, and coming surely, in the slow development of evolution, to a conscious knowledge of their community of interest as against the vested "rights" of monopoly in the material instruments of production. But athwart this path of progress rose the hardened structure of the Christian Church, bringing to bear against it all her temporal power and the full force of her accumulated superstitions.

But now the speaker's calm deserted him, and, with fist uplifted in threatening gesture, and his strong, bronzed face working with the fervor of his hate, he cried out against the ministers of Christ, who preach to the wronged and down-

THE SOCIALIST MEETING.

trodden poor the duty of patience with their "divinely appointed lot," and who try to soothe them to blind submission with promises of an endless future of ecstatic blessedness, when the rich of this world shall burn in the unquenchable fires of hell.

"Oh! the fiendishness of these men," he shouted, "who hide from ignorant minds the truth, which they themselves know full well, that for no mortal man is there any heaven or hell which he does not realize in the span of his earthly history, and if he misses here the happiness to which he was rightly born, he misses it forever! And the miserable paltriness of their motive in working this cruel wrong—merely that they may exempt themselves from toil and live in comfort upon the labor of others, instead of being, where most of them belong, out in the open fields hoeing corn!"

In another moment a man of widely different cult was speaking. For some time he had been trying to gain the floor, and now the Leader recognized him. He was a Christian Socialist, chief spokesman of the little band of his persuasion, who were very regular in their attendance upon these meetings. An insignificant Englishman he was, whose h's transposed themselves with consistent perversity, and whose general qualities of physique, and tone, and manner reminded one strongly of the type of parson with weak lungs and a large family who is incumbent in out-of-the-way English churches on the Continent. He was not wanting in pluck nor in a certain strength of conviction, but the gentleness of the dove was his without the wisdom of the serpent, and the words he spoke, in weak voice and apologetic manner, while they would have met with sympathy in a company of believers whose emotions were already stirred, served here only to inflame the antagonisms of men whose views were stoutly materialistic.

The Communistic Anarchist was the first to rise when the Christian Socialist sat down, and the Leader gave to him the privilege of the floor. There was the power of primal force in the suppressed passion of the man, and joined to this the exciting struggle of a human will in keeping rage in bounds. His heavy frame heaved with paroxysms of volcanic wrath, and the sibilants of English speech, augmented by the z's in Teutonic struggle with the sound of th, came hissing and sputtering through his teeth from a tongue which could not frame words fast enough for his impatience.

I have no power to reproduce his actual sentences, and at best I can but suggest the purport of his talk, which was in full sympathy with most of what had gone before:

"God a decaying myth, and the Bible a silly legend, and Jesus a good man seeing some human truth, but gone mad in the credulous ignorance of his age, and dead these two thousand years, and Christianity a hoary superstition, made use of in its last days by *bourgeois* civilization to stave off a little longer its own fateful day of reckoning! And here is a man, who calls himself a Socialist, who dares to bring before us this enfeebled monster of worn-out faith, which has been the tyrant of the poor from the moment of gaining temporal power, trying to hide its oppressions under a guise of so-called charity! It has been, too, from the beginning the stubbornest foe of scientific knowledge, and even now, in the last hour of its heartless cruelties, employs its utmost craft to put off the manifest dawn of freedom to the workers."

Breaking through the forced restraint of the beginning, his feelings bore him in resistless course until, in the full sweep of his long arms, his fingers were clutching wildly at the empty air, and his blood-shot eyes were rolling in a frenzy, and his hair stood straight on end, while his voice rose to its highest pitch in fierce scorn and denunciation.

The hall was still echoing to the roar, when a scattered number of us were on our feet, straining forward in our efforts to catch the Leader's eye. The Victim was recognized, and almost immediately the meeting began to feel the calming effect of a cool, conciliatory mind. Clearness was highly characteristic of the Victim's mental processes, and, as his ideas slowly framed themselves, in translation to English from the native language in which he thought, they took on a charming piquancy and precision, in the oddest mixtures of strange idioms and bookish phrases and the current coin of common slang.

"The assigned subject for debate this afternoon," he was saying (in a paraphrase which wholly lacks his strongly individual character), "is one which opens up questions of great economic value and importance. It is a pity, it seems to me, that the time has been consumed in a discussion of side issues, rather than of the fundamental question of the observance of Sunday as an economic institution, and the relation borne to that great issue by the present agitation over the opening of the Exposition grounds on Sundays. It is well to remember that this is a meeting of Socialists. Freedom of speech is one of our cardinal beliefs. But a freedom of speech which ignores the subject appointed for debate would make better use of its liberty by asking for a particular afternoon to be devoted to the theme which it wishes to discuss.

"Not only has the talk of to-day been wide of the mark, but it has been out of harmony with the genius of Socialism. I am proud to own myself a Scientific Socialist, and a disciple of Karl Marx. To my way of thinking, there can be no verified truth which the mind of man can accept as such aside from the established results of naturalistic science. I, therefore, attach no more value to Christianity, as an authoritative source of truth, than I do to the sacred writings of my race. Both are merely historical facts, to be dealt with precisely as are all the facts of history. This afternoon, however, they have been dealt with in a spirit of intolerance, as malignant and uncompromising as the spirit which is charged against historic Christianity. It will be well for us who profess Socialism to be on our guard, lest there grow up among us an intolerance bred of dogmatic science, which may prove in the future as destructive of free thought and of true progress as has proved in the past the bigotry of dogmatic theology."

It was now well past the ordinary time for adjourning. The Leader announced the fact, and I feared that he meant to call for a motion to adjourn without making his usual closing speech. It was his habit to sum up the discussion, and we always looked forward to that address, for the Leader had the gift of speech and a liking for it, and a knowledge, moreover, of the minds of Socialists which was by no means common. There was little of the declamatory in his habitual speaking, and he lacked the analytical skill of some of the other members, but he had a shrewd perception of the dramatic, and he could make use of it to striking purpose. He had been born and bred a workingman, and was an artisan of much ability, and he knew thoroughly the workmen's point of view. I have watched him play upon their feelings with the skill of a native orator.

He spoke now in high commendation of what The Victim had said, and deplored the fact that the afternoon had passed without discussion of the appointed theme. As a Socialist, he regretted, he said, that the talk had taken the form of an attack upon Christianity. Such a spirit was directly counter to the tolerance of Socialism. For his own part, although he had been brought up under the influence of the Protestant religion, he found himself very little in sympathy with modern Christianity. Supernaturalism he was willing to regard as a question apart, and as being entitled to fair, dispassionate discussion, but the Christian Church, as a practical embodiment of the teachings of its founder, he felt justified in judging in the light of every-day facts, and in their light he was free to say that Christianity was a failure.

"Let us take an illustration," he went on. "A very urgent problem in our city just now is that of 'the unemployed.' Certain of the newspapers have made a careful investigation in the last few weeks, and the result of their inquiry shows that, within the city limits to-day, there are at least thirty thousand men out of work. There may be fifty thousand, but the first estimate is well within the truth.

"It is a matter primarily of supply and demand. Among these idle men there may be many inefficients and many chronic loafers, and many who, from one cause and another, are incapable of effective work. But the nature of the present status is unaffected by these considerations. It means, in its last analysis, that the local labor market is overstocked to the extent of thirty thousand men. However willing to work, and however efficient as workmen they might be, these men, or their equivalent in number, under existing conditions, would invariably find themselves unemployed.

"And how does the Christian Church among us hold itself in relation to this problem? Its members profess themselves the disciples of 'the meek and lowly Jesus,' whom they call 'divine.' He said of Himself that 'He had not where to lay His head,' and He was the first Socialist in His teaching of universal brotherhood.

"His followers build gorgeous temples to His worship in our city, and out of the fear, apparently, that some of the shelterless waifs, whom He taught them to know as brothers and who are in the very plight their Master was, should lay their weary heads upon the cushioned seats, they keep the churches tight locked through six days of the week, and then open them on one day for the exclusive purpose of praising that Master's name!

"Nor is this condition truer of Chicago than it is of any large industrial centre in this country, or even in all Christendom," he went on, warming to his theme as the intently listening company hailed vociferously the name of the Redeemer as the first teacher of Socialism. "Only last week news came from London that the unemployed there had grown to an army of one hundred thousand men. Picture the horror of it, and the suffering, and the awful degradation, not in these men alone, but among the women and children whom they represent! Cold, and hunger, and the ravages of disease were bad enough, in the ferocity of this inclement winter; but imagine, if you can, the pitiless despair which is eating the hearts out of these our brothers, and then tell me whether we have not here a fairly good imitation of the hell where 'the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.'

"Suppose, for a moment, that the Christ were to appear in the heart of that 'Christian' city. Most certainly He would be found among the poor, ministering to their needs, and comforting them in their sorrows, and bringing life and hope among them. I can imagine His perplexity at sight of the man-inflicted suffering and degradation, and the Godless tyranny of men over their brother men, in the very stronghold of Christianity and two thousand years after He had taught that, under the Fatherhood of God, to love our neighbor as ourselves is the fulfilling of the law to all who have need of our sympathy and help.

"I hear Him ask in His amazement for some authoritative head of the brotherhood which He established upon earth. I hear men tell Him that He must see the Archbishop of Canterbury. I watch Him as He walks to the palace of the Archbishop, along narrow streets which thunder to the din of mammon-worship and which are blackened with the smoke from off its countless altars, seeing everywhere the hideous contrasts between rich and poor, and the lives of His toiling ones worn out in ceaseless labor.

"Weighed down with the heartless misery of the world, I see Him stand patiently at the palace-gate. A footman in rich livery answers to His knock.

"'I would see the Archbishop,' says the Christ.

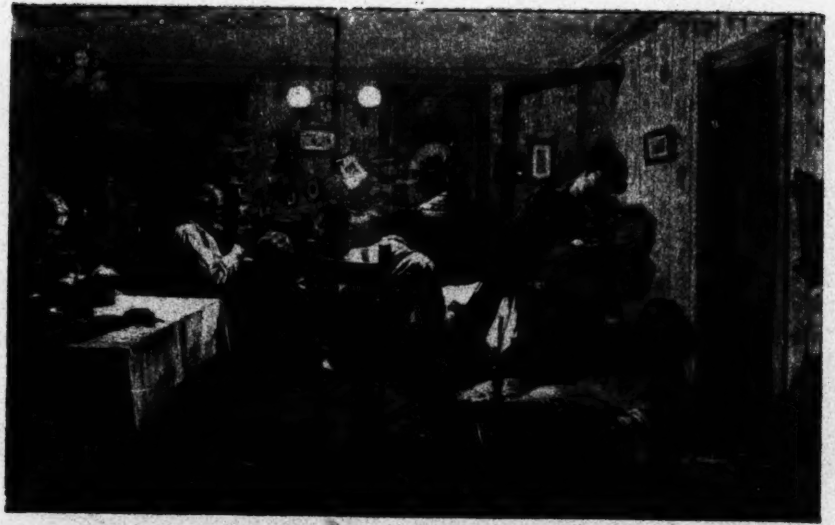
"'And who shall I say wishes to see his Lordship?' asks the flunky.

"'Tell him that his Master is at the gate.'

"'Oh,' replies the servant, 'but his Lordship has no "master"; he is the primate of all England!'"

Here the speaker abruptly ceased, but for that gathered company the picture was complete, and the cheers with which the hall had rung at the mention of Christ, the social teacher, were changed to hisses against the church which calls itself by His name.

On the crowded stairs, as we descended to the street, I found myself beside a young German mechanic whose acquaintance I had made in these meetings. My knowledge of him was limited to the fact that he was a Socialist and was employed in a large factory on the North Side.



THERE WAS NOTHING IN THE DOMESTIC SCENE WHICH MET US TO SUGGEST THE HOME OF A REVOLUTIONARY.

"What are you going to do, this evening?" he asked, after our exchange of greetings.

"I have no definite plan," I said.

"Then come home with me," he suggested, and I assented gladly.

We were a long time getting there, but when, at last, we reached his door, the journey was quickly forgotten.

As flat as the untroubled sea, the open prairie lay about us, browned and seared by frosts and gleaming faintly under the winter stars. Long parallels of street-lamps, cutting one another at right angles, marked the outlines of city "blocks," and threw into stronger relief the deep black of clustered trees and the forms of lonely cottages with lights glancing dimly from their windows.

When my friend opened the door of his house, there was nothing in the domestic scene which met us to suggest the home of a revolutionary. It was the typical home, rather, of the prosperous American workman. The living-room, which we entered, was aglow with light, and redolent of dry, unwholesome, excessive heat from a closed iron stove, and it seemed at first to be already crowded by occupants. The wife was standing over a cradle, in which she softly rocked her baby, whose sleep was undisturbed by the conversation between two young men of the family. An old couple, seated in easy chairs, were reading to themselves, and formed a feature of the picture that fitted well with the books which stood ranged in swinging brackets on the wall. There was the usual floral paper, with a border sad enough to move one to tears, and the worsted tidies, and the prints wherein sentimentality has so long and so often posed as sentiment. But the plain, rough furniture was redeemed by the marks of long usefulness, and the room, as a whole, had all the cosey homeliness of fitness to those whom it served.

Soon we were seated at supper, and the family, accustomed, apparently, to the presence of a stranger brought home from the meeting, left my friend and me to our own discussion of Socialistic themes. I found this deeply interesting, for my host was finely representative of the views of the majority of the Socialists whom I saw at Waverley Hall. In the main he was a Social Democrat. His economic views were drawn, I found, entirely from Karl Marx. "*Das Kapital*" was his Bible, and he seemed to know it by heart. To question Marx's theory of value or his treatment of labor in relation to production was blasphemy akin to casting doubt before a devout believer upon the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures.

He was a Socialist of serene temperament, with boundless faith in the silent processes of development. Propaganda was hysterical from his point of view.

"There could be no propaganda in behalf of Socialism," he said to me, "one hundredth part so effective as the unchecked activity of men who imagine themselves the bulwarks of social order and the bitterest foes of Socialism. We have no quarrel with the increasing centralization of capital. The opposition to 'trusts' and the like comes mainly from the *bourgeoisie*, who feel themselves being forced out of independent business. We Socialists are already of the proletariat, and we see clearly that all trusts and syndicates are the inevitable forerunners of still greater centralization. The men who are employing their rare abilities in eliminating the useless wastes of competitive production, by unifying its administration and control, and so reducing greatly the cost of the finished article, and who are perfecting the machinery of transportation and distribution by like unity of administration, are doing far more in a year to bring about a co-operative organization of society than we could do, by preaching the theory of collectivism, in a hundred years.

"The collectivist order of society may be distant, but, at least, we have this comfort—that the day of the old individualist, anarchical order is past. We can never return to it. The centralization of capital has proved the inadequacy of all that, in the present stage of progress. We have no choice but to go on to further centralization, and the logical outcome must be eventually, not the monopoly of everything by a few, but the common ownership of all land and capital by all the people."

. . . .

It was in the middle of the next morning that I chanced to meet, in the thick of a sweat-shop region of the West Side, an old acquaintance of the Socialist meetings. "The Unionist" I shall call him, for he had much to do with organizing the workers in sweat-shops into labor-unions. A victim of the sweaters himself, earning his living at a sewing-machine in a densely crowded shop, he yet managed to get about among the other victims and further their organization. More than once he had taken me with him on his rounds, and I had grown familiar with the sight of rooms, in all the poorer sections of the city where the rent is relatively low, turned into factories on a small scale for the manufacture of ready-made garments.

And this idea of miniature factories is really

AN EVASION OF THE FACTORY SYSTEM OF PRODUCTION.

the key to the situation. The industry of ready-made clothing is an enormous one, involving millions of dollars of invested capital, and competition among the merchants is very keen. The difference of a fraction of a cent in the cost of production, by the piece, of a given garment may mean the difference between profit and loss in the whole output. Cheapness of production is, therefore, of the first necessity.

Merchants of the greatest executive ability and highest efficiency are able to secure the maximum of cheap production through the legitimate factory system. Men of less business ability, in order to compete successfully, avoid the factory system of production and make use of the sweat-shops instead. The sweat-shop is, therefore, in a single word, an evasion, under the stress of competition, of the factory system of production.

There are few industries which could profit any longer by this system as opposed to that of the factory, but the manufacture of ready-made clothing is an exception; and, in it, the less fit to survive are sure to take advantage of the sweat-shops, until they have been driven out of the business altogether by those whose superior abilities enable them to undersell the product of the shops with the product of legitimate factories.

The manufacturer who makes use of the factory system at once subjects himself to certain regulations. His work-rooms must show a certain cubic area to every operative employed; certain sanitary provisions must be regarded; children under a certain age must not be set to work, and a prescribed number of hours must be accepted as the limit of the working day.

But the manufacture of ready-made clothing lends itself to an easy escape from all this. Instead of having his work done in a factory, subject to wholesome but costly restrictions, a merchant may give it out to the lowest bidders among the sweaters. These men take it to their homes, and secure there the services of their wives and children, and employ the families of their neighbors. Thousands of rooms are thus closely packed with workers who have underbid one another in the struggle for existence, until, in the cheapest quarters available, without regard to light and air, and decent sanitation, the work is hurried forward at feverish haste by human wretches whose utmost toil through excessive hours can often earn them little more than the means of bare subsistence.

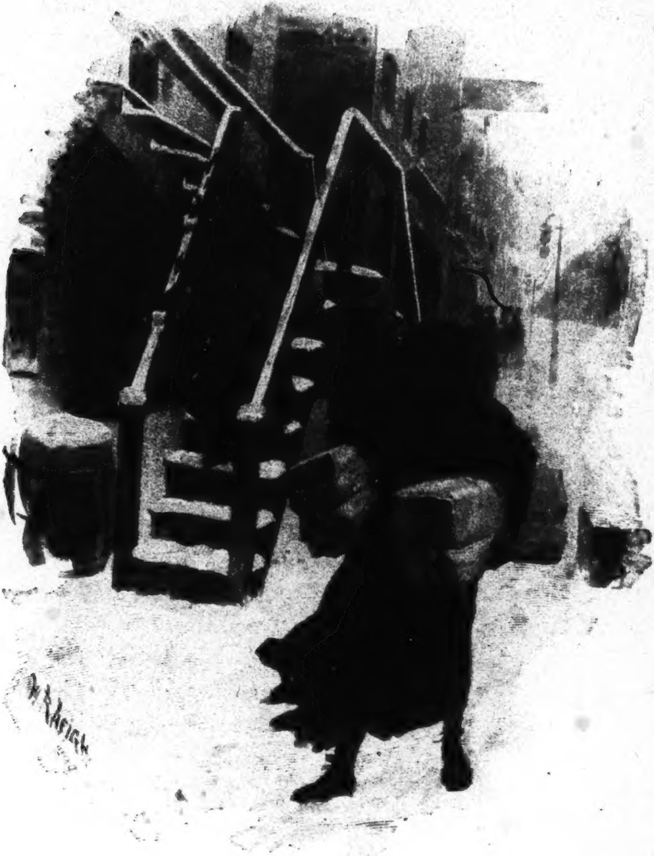
The Unionist was leading me in a brisk walk through a labyrinth of city squalor. Over unswept wooden pavements we passed, along uncleaned, wooden streets, in whose broken surfaces lay heaps of decaying garbage. Wooden houses for the most part flanked the way, hideous, blackened shanties which leaned grotesquely on insecure foundations, with rickety flights of broken steps clinging to the buildings' sides, where, on warmer days, the teeming population can be seen overflowing from work-rooms and sewing ceaselessly, even in their search for fresh air.

Opening directly upon the black rot of crumbling pavements were the steep descents to dark cellars which undermine these reeking hovels. From many of them, as we passed, came the hot breath of furnaces laden with the wholesome smell of baking bread. These were the underground bakeries of the region, and down their wooden steps, whose surfaces were buried under layers of hardened filth, were ranged the great round loaves of dark bread on which this population largely lives. While through the open doors, which admitted freely the floating germs from off the putrid streets, we caught glimpses of baking-tins full of soft muffins ready for the oven, and bakers in white dress who moved about in the gloomy, fetid air over floors strewn with ashes and the crumpled shells of eggs and crumbs of unbaked dough.

Mingling in the squalid crowds upon the

streets were other figures peculiar to the scene. Women they were for the most part, with ragged, faded shawls tied round their heads and falling over their shoulders, and limp skirts, dangling about their legs and brushing the surface slime of the pavements. Some upon their shoulders, and others in Oriental fashion upon their heads, they bore large bundles of clothing which had been cut at the great dealers' shops, and which they were taking now to be made up in the sweaters' dens.

The Unionist was talking rapidly, almost vehemently, at my side, with the swift, nervous gesticulation of his race, for he was a young Polish Jew, of short, sturdy figure, with wiry black hair, and eyes which were like burnished coals. The scenes about us, which were far more interesting to me, concerned him not at all in contrast with the delight he felt in picturing the outcome of political change. Like so many of the Socialists whom I met, he was an admirable workman, and thoroughly practical in his views of life, and hugely energetic and efficient in the organization of his trades-union; but yet he was possessed, as most of them are, of a strange faculty of living intensely at times in dreams of a fulfilment of preconceptions of another social order. He was hard at it now, and was completely blind to the



RETURNING WORK FROM SWEAT SHOPS.

significant facts about us. With an amazing acquaintance with contemporaneous political history, he had been sketching for me what he regarded as a great economic revolution in America. The drift of what he said was simply that in this country, from colonial days to the present, the middle-class, who are the small owners of land and capital, have been the main support of the society in which we have lived, and that the chief strength of the middle-class has been the farmer.

In every movement in this country wherein the wage-earners have sought for separate political action in their own interests, they have invariably found the farming classes in opposition to them and supporters of conservatism. But there are marked indications of a change, he went on. The farming classes are no longer economically independent, in the sense of owning their land and capital, but are tenants of the capitalists who hold their mortgages. And, with this change in economic standing, they have begun to find that their interests lie, not in maintaining rights of private property, which have robbed them of their own, but in joining forces with all wage-earners to bring about a state of things wherein property shall be a monopoly of all.

And having touched once more in prophetic spirit the beatific vision of the Socialist, he waxed eloquent in high praise of it, and then turned to me with an impatient:

"Can't you see it, Comrade Vikoff—can't you see it?"

He sympathized with me as one of the countless seekers for employment in the city, and he had cultivated me because of my interest in the meetings. Really admirable in their sincerity were his patient efforts to convert me to Socialism; and when, at last, he gave me up, I am sure that it was from the conviction that he was dealing with a mind hopelessly Philistine, whose constant appeal to dry facts marked it as wholly incapable of appreciation of the charming theory of human perfectability.

We turned now and passed down a flight of wooden steps to the basement of a small, brick building. I knew that we were going into a sweater's den, for I had visited many of them under the lead of the Unionist, and many of them on my own account in futile search for work.

There was nothing exceptional in this one beyond the fact that, more commonly than in the cellar, I had found the shops on the ground floor, and oftener still in the upper stories of tenements.

As we neared the door, there was the usual sound of the clattering rush of sewing-machines going at high speed—starting and stopping abruptly, at uneven intervals, and giving you the impression, in the meantime, of racing furiously with one another.

The opened door revealed the customary sight of a room perhaps twenty feet square, with daylight entering faintly through two unwashed windows, which looked out upon the level of the street. The dampness showed itself in dew-like beads along the walls and on the ceiling, which I could easily reach as I stood erect. In spite of its being winter, the dingy walls were dotted with black flies, which swarmed most about a cooking-stove, over which, stirring a steaming pot, stood a ragged, dishevelled woman, who looked as though she could never have known any but extreme old age. In the remaining floor-space were crowded a dozen machines or more, over which, in the thick, unventilated atmosphere, were the bending figures of the workers. Oil-lamps lit up the inner recesses of the room, and seemed to lend consistency to the heavy air. From an eye here and there, which caught his in a single movement, the Unionist received a look of recognition, but not a head was turned to see who had entered, and the whir of feverish work went on, unchecked for an instant by our coming.

While the Unionist was talking to the sweater, I walked between the close lines of machines over a floor covered with deep accumulations of dirt, and shreds of cloth, and broken threads, to where, in a corner, a group of girls were sewing. The oldest among them may have been twelve, and the youngest could have been a little over eight, and their wages averaged about seventy-five cents a week for hours that varied widely according to the stress of work.

Near the corner was a passage, and through it I could see into a small room which had no window, nor any opening but the door; there, in perpetual darkness lit up by one oil-lamp, was a man who, for twelve (and sometimes fifteen) hours a day, pressed the new-made clothing for a living.

It was ladies' cloaks that the sewers were making; of course, they worked by the piece, and the best among them could earn a dollar in the day, and sometimes more by working over-time. They were very smart-looking garments, and their air of jaunty stylishness was a most incongruous intrusion upon their surroundings. When I asked the Unionist for whose trade they were being made, he seemed to think nothing of the fact that he mentioned, in answer, one of the foremost merchant-citizens of the town.

We were on the point of leaving, when a heavy foot-fall sounded on the wooden steps, and the door opened to the touch of an inspecting officer, whose glowing health and neat, warm uniform were as though a prosperous breeze were sweeping the stagnant room. The work, however, was as unaffected by his coming as it had been by ours. Not a sewer noticed him, and the stitching of machines went racing on with unabated swiftness. Only "the old man" watched nervously the movements of the officer, as he walked about the shop, making note of the bad air, and the filth upon the floors, and the group of little girls, and the dark, unventilated chamber beyond.

The Unionist had caught me by the arm.

"We'll wait," he said; and we stood together in the shadow of the open door.

Returning finally to the side of the old sweater, the officer handed him a printed form.

"You must make out this blank," he said, "and have it ready for me when I call again." And without another word he started for the stairs. But on the way some evidence of unsanitary condition more shocking than any met with yet—a heap of offal on the floor, or a fouler gust of poisoned air—checked him, and he turned, indignantly, to the nearest worker.

"Look here," I could hear him say, "you've got to clean up here, and right away. The first thing you know you'll start a fever that will sweep the city before we can stop it."

The young Hebrew had stopped his work and turned half round in his chair until he faced the officer. There were deep lines in his haggard, beardless face, and his wolfish eyes were ablaze with the sense of sharp injustice.

"You tell us we've got to keep clean," he answered, in broken English, lifting his voice to a shout above the clatter of machines. "What time have we to keep clean when it's all we can do to get bread? Don't talk to us about disease; it's *bread* we're after, *bread!*" And there sounded in the voice of the boy the cry of the hungry for food, which no man hears and can ever forget.

The officer passed, speechless, up the steps, and we followed into the clean, pure air, under the boundless blue of smiling skies.

"DON'T TALK TO US ABOUT DISEASE; IT'S *BREAD* WE'RE AFTER, *BREAD!*"

CHAPTER VI

A ROAD BUILDER ON THE WORLD'S FAIR GROUNDS

COLUMBIAN ANNIVERSARY HOTEL—No. 1.
CHICAGO, ILL., Wednesday, April 27, 1892.

FROM the time that I began work on the Exposition grounds, early in this month, it has grown increasingly difficult to hark back in imagination to the unemployed *régime* of the winter. The change is a revolution of condition. Hundreds of us live all together within this vast enclosure, and have rare occasion to go out except on Sundays, and then only if we choose. We get up in the morning to an eight-hour day of wholesome labor in the open air, and return in the late afternoon with healthy appetites to our temporary "hotel," which is fragrant of clean, raw pine, and stands commandingly on the site of the future "court of honor" near the quiet waters of the lake. About four hundred of us are housed and fed in this one building; men of half a score of nationalities and of as many trades, ranging from expert carpenters and joiners and staff-moulders and steel-workers to the unskilled laborers who work in gangs, under the direction of the landscape-gardeners or, as in my case, on the temporary plank roads which are built for the heavy carting.

Guarded by sentries and high barriers from unsought contact with all beyond, great gangs of us, healthy, robust men, live and labor in a marvellous artificial world. No sight of misery disturbs us, nor of despairing poverty out in vain search for employment. Work is everywhere abundant and well paid and directed with highest skill. And here, amid delicate, web-like frames of steel which are being clothed upon with forms of exquisite beauty, and among broad, dreary wastes of arid dunes and marshy pools which are being transformed by our labor into gardens of flowers and velvet lawns joined by graceful bridges over wide lagoons, we work our eight hours a day in peaceful security and in absolute confidence of our pay.

Complete as the revolution is, it is yet in perfect keeping, in some strange way, with the general change wrought by the coming of the spring. This spring, in its effect upon the labor market in Chicago, was like the heralding of peace and plenty after war.

There was no longer any real difficulty in securing work. The employment-bureaus offered it in abundance in the country, and there was some revival of demand even within the city limits. This by no means solved the problem of the unemployed, however. Many of the men were so weakened by the want and hardship of the winter that they were no longer in condition for effective labor. Some of the bosses who were in need of added hands were obliged to turn men off because of physical incapacity. One instance of this I shall not soon forget. It was when I overheard, early one morning, at a factory-gate, an interview between a would-be laborer and the boss. I knew the applicant for a Russian Jew who had at home an old mother and a wife and two young children to support. He had had intermittent employment throughout the winter in a sweater's den, barely enough to keep them all alive, and, after the hardships of the cold season, he was again in desperate straits for work.

The boss had all but agreed to take him on for some sort of unskilled labor, when, struck evidently by the cadaverous look of the man, he told him to bare his arm. Up went the sleeve of his coat and of his ragged flannel-shirt, exposing a naked arm with the muscles nearly gone, and the blue-white, transparent skin stretched over sinews and the outlines of the bones. Pitiful beyond words was his effort to give a semblance of strength to the biceps which rose faintly to the upward movement of the forearm. But the boss sent him off with an oath and a contemptuous laugh, and I watched the fellow as he turned down the street, facing the fact of his starving family with a despair at his heart which only mortal men can feel and no mortal tongue can speak.

Other men there were in large numbers who during the winter had swelled the ranks of the unemployed, but who now, in the reviving warmth and the growing demand for labor, drifted out upon the open country to their congenial life of vagrancy. There still remained, however, and apparently in full force, the shrewd gentry who stop pedestrians on the street with apologetic explanations of hard luck and with begging appeals for a small sum wherewith to satisfy immediate wants. Clark and I had soon come to know this as a recognized occupation among the men with whom we were thrown. A highly profitable trade it often proved, for a dollar a day is a gleaning not at all uncommon to these men, and the more skilful among them can average a dollar and a half. They are rather the sporting spirits among the professionally idle ; gambling is their chief diversion, and their contempt for honest work is as genuine as that of a snob.

But within this chaotic maelstrom of the unemployed, which in every industrial centre seethes with infinite menace to social safety, is always a large element which is not easily classified. It was still to be found on the streets and in the lodging-houses of Chicago when the winter was gone, in seemingly undiminished numbers and in much its accustomed thriftlessness. The class has to be defined in negative terms. The men are not physically incapable of work, nor are they habitual tramps, nor yet the beggars of the pavements, and they lack utterly the grit for crime. If they have a distinctive, positive characteristic as a class, it is that they are victims of the gregarious instinct. By an attraction which is apparently irresistible to them, they are drawn to congested labor markets, and there they cling, preferring instinctively a life of want and squalor in fellowship with their kind to one of comparative plenty in the intolerable loneliness of the country.

There is a semblance of sincerity in their search for work, but they are cursed with the rudiments of imagination which makes cowards of them all, and their incapacity is a weakness of will rather than of brawn. Shrinkingly they walk the narrow ledge which in many planes of life separates from tramphood and crime, while lacking the wit for the latter and the courage for both lives, and looking ever for something to turn up instead of resolutely turning something up. Civilization is hard on such men, and their sufferings are none the less real because chiefly due to their incapacity for the struggle for existence. And not only their own misery must be reckoned with in any fair estimate of the case, but far more the misery of their women and children, for these men are proletarians in the literalest meaning of the word.

Finding now that I could not only get work, but that I could actually be eclectic in the matter, I gladly took advantage of an opportunity of employment among the unskilled laborers on the Exposition grounds.

A sharp-eyed, energetic American, who superintends the gangs of unskilled laborers, took me on, and at once assigned me to duty under an Irish sub-boss by the name of O'Shea. When I became one of its number, Mr. O'Shea's gang of eight or ten men had torn up a considerable section of the plank road near the Transportation Building, for the purpose of altering the level. Most of us were put in charge of wheel-barrows.

These we filled with sand at a neighboring pile and then emptied it in heaps on the road-bed, while the remaining members of the gang spread the sand with shovels to the desired depth before replacing the planks. It was a cloudy morning early in April, with a cold, raw wind blowing in from the lake, and the work, not very fatiguing in itself, kept one comfortably warm until noon. We had a free hour for dinner then, and I simply accompanied the other gang-men to "Hotel No. 1," where my employment ticket, issued by the general superintendent of construction, procured for me without delay a meal-and-lodging ticket on trust.

A large, zinc-lined trough half full of water stood against the wall in an ante-chamber. Here men by the score were washing their hands and faces and drying them near by on roller towels. They then passed singly through the wicket at the dining-room door, where stood a man who punched each boarder's ticket as he entered.

Long wooden tables, heaped with dishes and lined with round-bottom stools, ran the great length of the room. The men took places in the order of their coming, until they had filled one table, when they would begin upon another, and there arose a deafening clatter of knives and forks and dishes and a tumult of mingled speech.

That dinner serves as a good illustration of our fare, both in what it offered and in what it lacked. A bowl of hot soup was at each man's place when he sat down, and, after finishing this, he was given a choice between roast beef and Irish stew. There were potatoes boiled in their jackets, and pork-and-beans, and bread in wide variety and in enormous quantity, and a choice of tea or coffee, and finally a pudding for dessert. Some of this was good, but all of it smacked of wholesale preparation, and appetites nicer than those of workingmen would have found difficulties with the dinner. Even ours were not proof against it all. I was struggling with a slice of tough roast-beef out of which the virtue had been cooked, when suddenly I caught an expression of comical dismay stealing over the ruddy, bristling face of the man opposite me. He was eating a piece of meat from a plate of Irish stew, and he spat it out upon the floor with a deep-drawn oath, and a frank assurance to his neighbors that " the meat was rotten," while his facial muscles were contorted with strong disgust. And the pudding was of such uncertain nature as to recall vividly the oft-repeated saying of a classmate at a college eating-club, that " flies in a pudding are quite as good as currants." Still the pork-and-beans were excellent and the bread and potatoes fine, and the coffee, which was served in large cups with the roast, was not impossible; certainly it was a well-fed crowd which sat smoking for a quarter of an hour or more on the rough embankments overlooking the Agricultural Building before going back to work.

Our gang was divided in the afternoon, and Mr. O'Shea left three of us, a German, an Irishman, and me, to open up a way for the teamsters through two long piles of paving-stones, which obstructed the road near the Fisheries Building. His parting word to us was that the stint was an afternoon's job, and we could easily have finished it in the four hours from one o'clock until five, had we worked with moderate swiftness.

The German and the Irishman fell to lifting stones to one side of the desired opening and I to the other. Every condition favored us. We had a definite task and not a difficult one, and no one to watch us at our work, nor drive us in its doing. The clouds had disappeared, and in the soft spring sunshine, with the bushes blossoming about us and the air full of the sounds of multiform labor, there was every stimulus to energetic effort for four hours. Not that the hours seemed short—they never do, I am convinced, even to well-seasoned unskilled workmen—but the difference between four hours of manual labor at a stretch and five is enormous, and to see my *confrères* quite as impatient of their flight, even under these most favoring conditions, and to mark that the sober business of their lives was still an abhorrent drudgery to be shirked if possible, led the way to very sad reflection.

Neither of them paid any attention to me until, late in the afternoon, there came a lull in their talk and I heard the Irishman's call.

"Hey, John!"

"Hello," I said.

"Was you going to shave off them whiskers for Easter?"

I told him that I had not thought of it.

"Well," he went on, "I hear the boys as have whiskers say as how they must go on Easter morning, and I thought maybe it was the same wid you."

"What are you after doing, getting yourself into a sweat?" he continued, for he had drawn off from the German and was making my way. "You be a fool to kill yourself; you don't earn the more by it, and they don't think any the better of you. Take it easy, man, take it easy; there's time enough."

He was an authority on the time, for every few minutes he would walk slowly over to where his coat and waistcoat lay on a heap of stones,

IT WAS A WELL-FED CROWD WHICH SAT SMOKING FOR A QUARTER OF AN HOUR OR MORE ON THE ROUGH EMBANKMENTS.

and drawing out a great silver watch, would critically examine it, and then announce the hour in a loud call to the German and me. At a quarter to five the two picked up their coats and went off, dodging behind shrubs and piles of building materials, until they made their exit at the gate, leaving a good third of the job unfinished.

That was on a Saturday. On Monday morning Mr. O'Shea singled out us three for as stiff a cursing as a boat's crew often gets, but to little purpose, apparently, in its effect upon the other men. On that very day I was again a member of a gang, a gang of four this time, which was left without an overseer. We were ordered to unload a car of timber and pile the boards near the mammoth framework on the east side of the Manufactures Building. Besides native inertia there was unusual cause for idling in the fact that one of our number, a young Englishman, Rosedale by name, proved to be uncommonly interesting. He was rather a trim fellow, of the adventurous, jack-of-all-trades kind, that roam the world widely, and that always appear in numbers at great celebrations and in new regions. How they live and secure the means of extensive travel is a secret which no member of the fraternity ever tells. There was no mystery about Rosedale just then, for he was a fellow-lodger in Hotel No. 1, and was No. — in the gang of laborers in which I, for example, was No. 472, and he fell into as natural association with the men as though he had lived with us always.

He was just up from South Africa, where he had been in the diamond fields, he said. Seventeen thousand dollars' worth of diamonds was the loot he was bringing with him to Canada, when he was shipwrecked off the coast of Labrador and escaped with only his life. Not one of us, I suppose, was anything but sceptical of much of Rosedale's story, but the man told his tale of free, reckless, vicious living on the diamond fields, with a vividness of narrative and a rough wealth of local color that charmed us into most attentive listeners, and that sped the morning hours with little regard to our job. Questions began to crowd in upon Rosedale as to the location of South Africa and the means of getting there, and great disappointment was evident in the discovery that it was not contiguous to any familiar point.

Noon found us with a pitiful showing for the morning's work. In the afternoon I secured the post inside the car, and passed the boards out to the three other men, who piled them near the building. By hastening the work at that end, I hoped to quicken the pace at which the job was being done. To be caught a second time in a delinquent gang I feared would endanger my position, and I was anxious to remain on the grounds, and even more anxious to secure a promotion if I could. It was easy to keep ahead of the men, but it was impossible, apparently, to urge them beyond the languid deliberation with which they shouldered the timber and carried it to the piles.

"Let up on that, John," they were shouting at me presently. "Go easy with that; there ain't no rush, and you'll make nothing by your pains."

It was the view which I had heard again and again in gangs of unskilled laborers. One could understand it in a measure among the older men, who could hope at the best only to eke out an existence free from the poor-house to the end. But these and many others from whom it came were relatively young men, with every chance, one would suppose, of winning some preferment through effective, energetic work.

At five o'clock, the end of the afternoon's labor, we had an hour in which to make leisurely preparation for a supper which consisted of cold meats in unstinted plenty, and potatoes, and bread, and tea and coffee, and often some stewed fruit with a little cake. After this most of the men loafed in the lobby until bedtime. This sitting-room includes the entire upper floor of a large wing of the building. An enormous base-burner heats it, and serves to render it stifling in the evening, when the men are smoking with every window closed. Games and newspapers strew the tables, and the room is well lighted with electric lamps.

On the same level is the upper section of the main building, where are the sleeping-quarters for the men. The provision here is similar in design to that of a cheap lodging-house; only this is almost immaculate in its cleanliness, and the cabins are large and well ventilated, and the ceilings high and airy, and the berths are supplied with new wire and clean corn-husk mattresses, and with sheets and pillow-cases fragrant from the wash.

Mine is a middle, lower berth in a cabin for six men, but it lodges at present only two besides myself.

In a bunk nearest the door sleeps an Irishman, whose acquaintance I made while getting ready for bed on the first night of my stay. Opening the door that evening and seeing me seated in the middle bunk, he stood eyeing me for a time with obvious displeasure. He was evidently not in the best of humors, and although but two of the six berths in the large cabin were occupied, he plainly regarded my coming as an intrusion. Neatly dressed in dark blue, and with an old felt hat on the back of his head, he cut a fine figure of a workman as he stood in the open door, a man of five-and-thirty, with a massive frame bent slightly forward and with a frown wrinkling the low forehead, from which the thick hair grew in tawny masses.

"Who let you in here?" was his first remark.

"The proprietor," I answered.

"Did he say you could have that bunk?"

"Yes."

"Well, —— it, is he going to flood the place?"

I knew no answer to that question, and so I ventured to ask after the occupant of the bunk nearest the window.

"He's an Englishman; works in the landscape gang wid me," replied the Irishman, laconically.

By this time he had seated himself on his bed with his elbows on his knees and his head bowed with an air of weariness. The change of subject had, fortunately, been effective, for he no longer objected to my presence, and for some time he sat talking freely in a droning, disjointed way.

I gathered that he was thoroughly dissatisfied with his work and wages and his boarding-place and with life in general. He did not enter into details of his personal history; his mood spent itself in anathemas against his present lot: "Work, ceaseless, unprofitable, joyless work. Eat and work; eat more and work; eat again and sleep and eat and work. This and nothing more; body and soul sold at a dollar and a half a day. And nothing else to look forward to, with chances only of a steadily hardening lot, throughout the on-coming of old age to death."

I had never heard a workman in pessimistic mood so coherent, and I felt sure that the Irishman was ill; for commonly with our class, a full meal and a pipeful at the end of a day's labor are enough to banish care and to tinge living with a glow of satisfaction. The suspicion proved true enough, for the man soon began to shake with a malarial chill in our cheerless barrack, and he told me that the ague laid hold of him regularly on alternate days.

It was the loneliness of the fellow that impressed one as he lay shivering in his bunk. There were hundreds of men in the house, but not one of them was charged with any responsibility for him, and there was no provision for illness. On his bad days he would force himself through the usual routine, but, when the day was done, there was nothing for him but to lie in lonely misery in his bed. Not that he whined in the least. I gathered these facts by inference. It was the barrenness of his life that he cursed, not its hardness, for this he accepted as a matter of course.

And yet one could not fail to see where finer feeling inflicted a sharper pain in his suffering. I had marked at once the neatness of his dress, and especially the cleanliness of person by which one distinguishes instantly between a workman and a tramp.

There are interesting degrees of cleanness in workingmen. One sees it at its best, I think, among those of the building trades. The stains of their labor are clean in themselves, and the men partake of the wholesomeness of their employment. The workers at rougher jobs must show the marks of soiling labor, but there is infinite difference between the earth stains of a common laborer and the ingrained, begrimed uncleanness of an unwashed vagrant. Having in the house, however, so many men, and just at the end of the long period of unemployment, it is inevitable, perhaps, that there should be a few of the number whose status as between workingmen and tramps is not clearly defined. And some of the consequences are unpleasant.

It was this that the Irishman had in mind as he looked me over critically and was somewhat slow in welcoming me to the cabin.

The same concern showed itself again when he presently told me that the Englishman and he always made up their berths themselves, instead of leaving them for the regular bed-makers, who might communicate vermin from other bunks. The hint was sufficient, and I hastened to set his mind at rest by assuring him that I heartily endorsed the plan and would follow it faithfully.

The Englishman I did not see until the next morning. Upon getting up to the six-o'clock call, I found that he had turned in without waking me. We sprang out of bed at the same moment, and almost at a glance I knew him for the ex-Tommy Atkins that he is. I shall call him Brown. A wooden chest, studded with brass nails and made fast with a heavy padlock, stood near the foot of his berth. On it lay his working clothes, not thrown down in confusion, but neatly folded and lying in the order of dress. He himself was as trim and straight and as clean as a sapling, and when he returned from his wash he fairly sparkled with the afterglow. Back went the sheets with a single movement of his hand the moment that he was dressed, and over went the mattress, and the pillows began rollicking in the shaking which he gave them. In marvellously short time the bed was remade and the sheets turned back over the foot of the bunk to admit of proper airing.

We have been thrown together by reason of the fact that neither of us is proof against the lobby for long in the evening. It is usually dark by the time I have finished supper, and I go first of all to the sitting-room. It is ablaze with light, and the huge stove is going under full head and all the windows are closed and some scores of men are smoking old pipes. I have known nights when such a place would have been a most welcome escape from exposure, but having now a choice it is never long before I leave the lobby for the cabin. Here I generally find Brown seated on the box at the foot of his berth, playing an old fife which is singularly pliant to his touch. Throwing myself in my bunk I have lain there by the hour together listening to his music and watching him as he beat time to the "British Grenadiers" and the "Blue Bells of Scotland," and to tunes of no end of barrack-room ballads, wondering the while what vision it was of India or of Burmah, perhaps, or of the Soudan, or possibly of the Afghan frontier that brought that look of longing to his eyes.

He is the soul of soldier-like precision; he never misses a day at work except the one which immediately follows pay-day, and that because he never misses his spree. The Irishman and I have come to count with perfect regularity upon Brown's not turning up on the evening when he is paid. About three or four o'clock on the next morning we hear him open the cabin door softly, and, supporting himself with a hand on the upper berths, move slowly across the floor until he has reached his bed, where he throws himself on his face as he is and sleeps for twenty-four hours.

I was not long a member of Mr. O'Shea's gang, for at the end of the first week another laborer and I were singled out for special duty on the roads. But on Wednesday afternoon of that week two men joined the force of unskilled laborers who filled us all with curious interest. There is another gang of about the same number as Mr. O'Shea's, with which we are often thrown in our work and which is under the command of a Mr. Russell.

At one o'clock on Wednesday afternoon I went as usual to report with the other men at the superintendent's office where we receive our orders. Mr. Dutton, the superintendent, always comes out and looks us over and consults for a few minutes with the sub-bosses, and then orders the various gangs to different sections of the grounds.

Two young men were standing near his office-door on that Wednesday afternoon when I came up at a few minutes before one. I did not give them a second glance at first, for I took for granted that they were tourists who had entered the grounds by special permission and were now waiting for a guide. But in another moment I happened to see Mr. Dutton's clerk beckon them within the office where he took their names and gave to each a metallic disk upon which a number was stamped. Then they came out again and, taking off their coats, stepped in among the gathering company of workmen and waited to be assigned.

By this time we were all staring at them agape, but they stood the ordeal with a frank unconsciousness which filled me with admiration. They were about of age, two clean-cut, well-groomed, clear-eyed English boys, who looked as though they might be public-school bred, and I noticed that their coats bore the name of a London tailor. One, a brown-haired lad, with large, sober, brown eyes and a manner of considerable reserve, was exceedingly good-looking, and the other, a fair-haired, fair-skinned, alert-looking boy, plainly the spokesman for the two, had a face of unusually fine drawing.

Mr. Dutton hesitated a moment in their case, but finally ordered them to join Mr. Russell's gang, and in a few minutes we were widely separated. Repeatedly in the early afternoon I found myself thinking about them and wondering why it was that they must earn their bread by unskilled labor. Two hours of the afternoon remained when there came an order from Mr. Dutton to our gang to repair to the Transportation Building. We found, upon getting there, that we had been summoned to reinforce Mr. Russell's men, who were unloading from a car two large steam-rollers. Again I saw the young Englishmen, and I had a chance to watch them at work.

By this time the gangmen had sated their curiosity in staring, and now ignored the lads as being anything but laborers with themselves, which was much the best-bred thing that they could have done.

As a preliminary to unloading, we had to carry to the car some heavy wooden blocks to serve as supports to an inclined plane by which the machines could be slid to the ground. It sometimes required four and even six men together to lift these blocks, and repeatedly I found myself next in line to the new-comers. Their linen collars were wilting with the sweat of labor, and it had apparently not occurred to them to take them off. Their shirts, of delicate color, were turned up above their elbows with gold link-buttons dangling from the cuffs. The rough wood was fretting their bare white arms cruelly. I had a chance presently to speak to one of them, and I showed him how he could get a hold which would not be so chafing. In a moment of leisure he came up and thanked me frankly, and volunteered the information that his friend and he were but a week over from England and, having failed utterly to find other work in Chicago where they had supposed that employment was plentiful, they were glad enough in an extremity to accept this means of living.

Most pluckily have they stuck at it. I have never again been associated with them in a job, but I see them almost every day, and through rain and shine they have been the steadiest members of their gang. Places better suited to them will be found, no doubt, as the general work progresses; and that will not be long, I hope, for just now the boys are at a considerable disadvantage. It was only two or three mornings ago that I happened to meet them again near

Mr. Dutton's office, where they had been sent to fetch some tools. The fairer boy wore a bandage which covered his left forearm and most of the hand. I asked him what had happened, and he explained to me how that in handling some old sleepers he had missed his hold in one case, and, with the fall of the heavy timber, a rusty iron nail tore down through his arm and the palm of his hand, leaving a ragged wound open nearly to the bone. He had had it dressed promptly by a good surgeon, who reassured him as to danger of complications. But it had taken all his companion's savings and his own to pay the original fee, and they were in arrears for the daily dressing. Luckily, however, he was still able to work, and Mr. Russell kept him employed, he told me, in ways which brought his injured arm very little into play.

Those of us who belong permanently to gangs such as Mr. O'Shea's and Mr. Russell's are known as "regulars," to distinguish us from the hands who are taken on, a day at a time, for some particular need. Quite the most efficient "regular" in my gang is a certain Henry Jerkener, who is that rare exception, so far as my experience goes, a native American in a company of unskilled laborers. "Harry," as he is called, and I were early assigned to special duty. Mr.

Dutton beckoned us aside one afternoon and ordered us to report to him at ten o'clock the next morning, telling us that our day, beginning henceforth at ten, would last until seven in the evening instead of five o'clock. And our wages would be raised from $1.50 to $1.75 a day.

Our work was to be the general care of all the plank roads on the grounds. They had been put in fairly good condition, but they received hard usage, and constant repairs were necessary. We were, therefore, to give our attention, up to five o'clock in the afternoon, to particular sections of the road which were most in need of mending, and after five, when the work for the day had ceased, our duty was to go over all the roads and see that they were in condition for the beginning of the carting in the morning.

Harry appeared delighted with the arrangement. Not that he took any special stock in me as an assistant, but because, however indifferent a workman, at least I was an American, and he would be free of the gang of Irish regulars and himself in charge of the work, instead of being under the orders of Mr. O'Shea.

Harry's good-humor is proof against anything, apparently, his temperament being that of a sunny May morning. But if there is anything which bores him, it is to be ordered about by an Irish sub-boss.

I did not discover this until after we had left the gang. So long as he was one of their number he was the life of the crew, jolly, high-spirited, with a ready flow of banter that was never delicate and never ill-tempered, always foremost in the work, having at command a fund of resourceful ingenuity which made him the real leader and director of the men while the boss looked on in silence. But after we had been assigned to special duty he bloomed into new jollity, which is at its best whenever in our work we heave in sight of the old gang. It is deliciously funny at such times to watch Harry. The men are probably fretting and straining over some heavy lifting or other difficult task. He first lets fly some irritating raillery in which he addresses them as "terriers;" and then, taking up a position within ear-shot, he begins to sing with a capital Irish brogue:

> "Oh, ye work all day for Paddy O'Shea,
> Dhrrrill, ye terriers, dhrrrill!"

Human nature cannot endure this for long, and presently a shower of sticks and tufts of turf drive Harry from his position and put an end for the time to his song.

Our place is by no means a sinecure. The roads are constantly falling into unrepair and a deal of hard work is necessary to keep them in order. Pick and shovel work, that most heart-breaking of manual toil so far as my experience goes, is mostly in demand, for the old trenches must be kept open and new ones dug, and sometimes the sides of long sections of the road must be buried under a layer of earth to prevent the bare planks from warping in the sun. After six hours of such labor there remain two in the early evening in which we go over every foot of roadway on the grounds and make whatever immediate repairs are necessary. At seven o'clock, Harry reports to the fire department, and then we are free.

It is not altogether easy to account for Harry as a common laborer. A well-set-up, muscular American of about fifty, with a singularly intelligent, shrewd face and the merriest of blue eyes, he might be, from his appearance, a well-to-do contractor. Only once with me has he touched upon the general subject of his past, and then he intimated that formerly he was well off, but that in his business relations he had always passed as a "good fellow." "And that means, you know," he said, turning upon me with a significant look, "that means a 'damn fool!'"

Among the workmen on the grounds whom I have come to know, none has interested me more as a type than an American carpenter with whom I sometimes spend an evening. The man is lonely and uncomfortable in his new surroundings. The novel conditions which here beset him as a workingman are quite as disturbing to him as the unfamiliar setting of his daily life. He clings tenaciously to his individuality, and the new order of things which confronts him here lightly makes strange havoc of all that.

We had not been talking many minutes on the embankment, where one day after dinner we first met, when the man's case shone clear as day. He is a master-carpenter from a village home in Ohio, and the certainty of steady work for many months at four dollars a day was tempting enough to induce him to leave his family behind and come here. He had arrived a few days before and had found instant employment.

Seeing the man, a tall, fine-looking, self-respecting American mechanic, and hearing him speak, and learning even this little of his history, you had direct vision of his past. You could almost see a comfortable, wooden cottage, of his own building, with a garden-plot about it and flower-beds in front, standing on a well-shaded village street. He owns the cottage and the plot of land, and his children were born there, and he is an officer in the village church, and has been justice of the peace, and more than once has served as "school trustee." Social inequality, as applying to himself, is a new idea, and it gives him a hitherto unexperienced sense of self-consciousness. In his native village his family meet the families of all his neighbors on the same footing, except that they recognize in the minister, and the doctor, and the village lawyer, and the school-master, a distinction which attaches to special education. His children study and play at school with the children of all his neighbors, and mingle freely with them at church and in their other social relations.

But here is something new and strange. He is no longer a man with a name to distinguish him, but has become a "hand," having a number which he wears conspicuous on his jacket. He goes to his work as an integer in an army of ten thousand numerals. Home has changed to a barrack, where he, a number, sleeps in a numbered bunk, and eats, never twice at the same place, as one of half a thousand men. His comfort and convenience are never consulted, and his views have no smallest bearing upon the course of things. The superintendent of the building upon which he works, whose energy and skill he admires hugely, shifts him about with scores of other men, with as little regard to him as an individual as though he were a piece of timber. Once he spoke to his superintendent about some detail of the work and found him a most appreciative listener. Then he ventured, in conversation, upon a subject of general interest, only to find that by some mysterious change he was speaking to a stone wall.

And now there confronts him what he regards as another sacrifice of individuality, which he is urged to make, and which gives him no little concern. He had scarcely known of the existence of Trades Unions, and now he is thronged with appeals to join one.

No discrimination is made by the management as between union and non-union men in employing workers on the Exposition; but many of the union men here are making the most of the present opportunity for the propaganda of their principles, and for bringing the desirable non-union men within their organization. My carpenter friend, whom I shall call Mr. Ford, comes in for a large share of attention, and is, as I have intimated, not a little perplexed by the situation.

Two or three times he has asked me to go with him in the evening to meetings which are held near the Fair Grounds, and which are addressed by delegates from the Central Labor Union. These we have not found very enlightening. There has been a good deal of beer-drinking and much aimless speech, which has grown heated at times in the stress of hostile discussion; and now and then a plain, matter-of-fact workingman has given us an admirable talk on the history of Trades-Unionism and its beneficent results, and the imperative need of organization among workers as the only means of safe-guarding their interests and of meeting, on any approach to equal terms, the peculiar economic relations which exist between labor and organized capital.

Mr. Ford, much bewildered, has listened to all this, and we have talked it over together on the way back to our lodgings, and sometimes late into the night. I have tried to explain to him, as well as I understand it, the idea of organization, and the necessity of organization which has grown out of the great industrial change since the middle of the last century. But Mr. Ford, for all practical purposes, belongs to the pre-revolutionary period; the industrial change has little affected him. He served his apprenticeship, and was then a journeyman and then a master-carpenter in due course. In his experience, work has always had its basis in a personal relation, as, for example, between himself as a contractor and the man whose job he undertook and to whom he looked for payment. A like personal relation has always existed between himself and the men whom he has employed.

This new relation between a workman and an impersonal, soulless corporation which hires him, is one that he does not readily grasp. And, for the sake of meeting the new relation, this "fusing all the skirts of self" and merging individuality into an organization which attempts to regulate the hours of labor, and its wages, and for whom one shall work, and for whom not, is a thing abhorrent to him.

"Why," he said to me, "I give up my independence, and I'm no better than the worst carpenter of the lot. We all get union-wages alike. There's no incentive for a man to do his best. He ain't a man any more, anyway; he's only a part of a machine. Why, such work as some I see done here, I'd be ashamed to do by moonlight, with my eyes shut. But it don't make no difference in the union, you're all on the same level, as near as I can make out."

Finally I proposed to him that we should go together, on some Sunday afternoon, to the meeting of the Central Labor Union, where he could become acquainted with some of the members and learn at first hand the objects and ends of organization and something of its actual working. The members whom I particularly wished him to know were some of the Socialists there, who seemed to me to have a considerable knowledge of Trades-Unionism, and who took, I thought, a judicial view of it.

As an unskilled laborer I was not eligible to membership in any union, but I was admitted freely to the central meetings, to which I sometimes went in company with Socialists who were delegates of their respective orders. Under their tutelage, I was shown the operation of an exceedingly complex system, which, seen without guidance, would have appeared to me hopelessly chaotic. I was seeing it, I realized, from the point of view of the Socialists, and I was interested immediately in learning their attitude.

They are, I found, most ardent supporters of the principle of organization among workingmen. They regard the fact of the organization of wage-earners as among the most significant developments in the evolution of a socialistic state. But they are very impatient of the slow rate of progress in Trades-Unionism. The ignorance of the great mass of workers of how to further their own interests is, to the Socialist, the most discouraging feature in labor-organization. "Why," they ask, "when we working people already have so strong a nucleus of organization for economic ends, do we not direct it at once into the field of politics, and secure immediately, by our overwhelming numbers, the legislation which we need, and so inaugurate a co-operative commonwealth?"

Nowhere have the walking-delegates and the general agitators of their class sincerer foes than among the Socialists who, more than to any other active cause, attribute the comparative ineffectualness of unionism to the influence of these men. Very readily they believe them purchasable, and that often they are little else than the paid agents of the capitalists. Their great influence over workingmen is used, the Socialists seem to believe, chiefly in their own interests and particularly for selfish political ends.

This habit of mind serves to illustrate what eventually appeared to me to be highly characteristic of the general attitude of Socialists. The key to their mental processes in considering things social, lies, I am quite sure, in the idea of existing conditions as being maintained by a vast capitalistic conspiracy. At all events this clew has cleared up for me the mystery which at first I found in many of their ways of thinking.

However natural may have been the social order in some of its historic phases, they evidently regard it at the present as largely artificial. There is no real vitality, they contend, in the political issues upon which the great national parties are divided. The party cries of "free trade" and "protection" and the like, are manufactured by professional politicians who are in the employ of the capitalists. The purpose is to divert the minds of the working classes by these sham contentions and so keep them about evenly divided politically, and thus prevent their coalescing in overwhelming force in political action for their own interests. Nothing seems to anger a Socialist more than the spectacle of workingmen roused to enthusiasm by the crowds and speeches and processions and brass bands of the usual political campaign. They see in them then only the ridiculous dupes of the capitalists, who have contributed to the campaign funds for the very purpose of thus befooling their employees, and who look with about equal indifference upon the momentary triumph of one party or the other so long as no labor party is in the ascendant.

However free in the past the play of purely natural evolutionary forces may have been in determining social development, and however free may be their course again in moulding a future state, their operation is checked for the present to the Socialists' vision by the active intervention of the capitalists, who, in some way, have succeeded in effecting a social structure which is highly favorable to themselves, and for whose undisturbed continuance they unscrupulously employ all the resources of wealth and craft and dark conspiracy. The idea appeared at its plainest, perhaps, in their more vindictive speeches, where the strong undercurrent of feeling was—"There is cruel injustice and wrong in society as it is, and someone is to blame for it, and unhesitatingly we charge the blame against the capitalists."

It was with this interpretation in mind that I took Mr. Ford with me one afternoon to the meeting of the Central Labor Union. I was curious to see the effect of the gathering upon him. A child of another age in his experience of certain economic relations, he was an interesting phenomenon in the sudden contact with modern industrialism.

When we reached the building, in the upper floor of which in a large hall are held the weekly meetings of the Central Labor Union, numbers of workingmen in their Sunday clothes were passing in and out of the neighboring saloons or loafing about the doors. The intersecting streets were strewn with small handbills, which we found covering the wide staircase leading to the hall and scattered over the seats and floor of the room itself. They were printed notices instructing the members to boycott the beer of certain breweries which were accused of employing non-union men, and also the products of this and that manufacturer, against whom similar charges were made.

We were a little early, but we chanced upon a Socialistic acquaintance of mine, who took us in with him and seated us well to the front. As the members entered I had a chance to point out to Mr. Ford those among them who had been pointed out to me as the officers of their various unions. He was deeply interested from the first, and much impressed apparently by the size of the gathering and the enormous numbers of organized workers which were represented there.

The stage of "new business" was barely reached that afternoon when matters were well beyond the control of the president. Motions and amendments and questions of privilege and points of order were fast driving him mad, when in despair he called upon a fellow-member to take charge of the meeting and become its temporary chairman. By this time there was a good deal of confusion; men in many parts of the hall were clamoring for the floor, and trying to drown one another's voices. But there was immediate recognition of a change of generalship. The man who had taken the chair was a member of a union of musicians, a person of excellent address and well-appearing, and, as it proved eventually, a masterly parliamentarian. To reduce to quiet an assembly so excited was beyond his power, but he did unravel the skein of its tangled business, and through all the uproar and confusion he kept his temper perfectly, and secured some actual disposition of the affairs in hand.

The intricacies of intermingling interests there represented were beyond measure bewildering. The Cigarmakers' Union had a grievance, which its representatives insisted upon presenting and having righted at once. But the Waiters' Union claimed an antecedent right to the presentation of a question with reference to admitting certain men to their organization. And the Bricklayers' Union demanded an immediate investigation of the account of expenditure for a certain recent Union picnic, charging directly, meanwhile, a flagrant misappropriation of funds.

Passions were running high. The lie direct was passed repeatedly, and men were all but shaking fists in one another's faces. The shouting rose sometimes to such a pitch that the chairman's voice could not be heard. But the passion was that of strong vitality. The Union, to its members, was an intensely living thing, and its issues, touching them so closely, most naturally roused comparatively untutored men to strong emotion.

I watched Mr. Ford with curious interest. Instead of showing any impatience or disgust at the show of temper and the loud disorder, he sat through the long session deeply, intently absorbed. Every question for debate, and every phase of discussion, and all the progress of the business, and the varying claims of the many organizations, and the widely differing personalities of the members, each won his vital interest, and, with amazing discrimination, he seemed to follow them with intelligent understanding. And when there came a report of progress in a strike among certain workers in shoe factories, and a statement of the causes of the strike and the measures which were being taken to carry it to a successful issue, I could see that he was more than ever roused.

"That's the most interesting meeting I ever was to," he said to me, as we walked down the street together. "I ain't never realized before how mixed up things can be when there's so many working people, and the men that hire them are mostly all organized in big companies. Why, the working people ain't got nothing else they can do but organize too, to get their just rights. They have a pretty hot time in their meetings, if that's a sample, but I guess they'll know what they're about. I guess I'll join."

In a very few days I must leave Chicago. I own to a longing to go and launch out upon the great farming regions between the Lakes and the Rocky Mountains, which I hope to cover in my journey before the autumn is far spent. I have been watching the coming of the spring in the Exposition grounds and in the charming parks of the city and along its beautiful boulevards, and I feel its subtle drawings to the country, to a life once more of labor in the fields. But I am very far from being prepared to go. Some little of a phase of life which in all large centres of population accompanies the swift industrial changes of the present I have seen here in Chicago, where it differs but slightly from similar conditions in every congested labor market. And under the play of the modern gregarious instinct there surely are few centralized markets which are not congested. But of the real city as a great positive force and a world-wide commercial power, whose unfaltering energies have built a huge metropolis in a generation, and are fast crowning their labors with splendid achievements in education and in art, I have been able to see little, and I have given no impression whatever. This much I have seen on the grounds where I am now a workman: I have watched something of the slow emerging from a scene of utter chaos of a co-ordinated scheme of landscape-gardening and of architecture, which has long passed the experimental stage, and is unfolding to the world, by a miracle of creative and constructive genius, a real vision of beauty and power and grace, which certainly holds for the living generation of civilized men a promise of rich blessings.

CHAPTER VII

FROM CHICAGO TO DENVER

THE BARTON FARM, FARIBAULT COUNTY,
MINNESOTA, July 6, 1892.

FOR a week past I have been Mr. Barton's hired man, but in the early morning I must take leave of the family and renew the long journey. More than once during the past year I have found it hard to say good-by to an employer, but that is altogether apart from the real sadness of the present farewell.

It might have been months ago, so strong has my attachment to Mr. Barton's family grown and so well do I feel that I know them, that Mr. Barton stopped me on the wayside as I was leaving Blue Earth City and offered me work on his farm. I hesitated, but finally agreed to accept his offer for a week. I am staggered now at realizing how near I came to missing an experience which will always be a cherished memory of my life.

With utmost hospitality I, a mere chance workman, picked up on the public highway, was taken in by the Bartons and made one of themselves; and during the days since I have shared their life of summer industry with hard work for all of us from five in the morning until nightfall, but healthful, worth-while work, and with it a home most daintily neat, and having an atmosphere of true refinement and of simple, genuine religion.

My pain at leaving is precisely that which one feels in the farewells which end the rare, half-born friendships of life. A voyage, perhaps, or a short sojourn in a foreign country proves the chance occasion of a meeting, and kindred hearts awaken to quick recognition of one another, and then their roads diverge and from the parting of the ways each bears a sorrow which is of the tragedy of existence. Who has not felt that sadness and seen its shadow fall over the face of nature and far over the coming days?

There is, in my mind, no smallest fear of fresh encounter with an untried world. I have long since lost all such feeling, and can set forth of a morning as light of heart, as free from anxious care as are the birds which share my early start, and with a sense of pure animal enjoyment which is, I sometimes dream, not far removed from their own.

And with small wonder can I be so careless, for ever since I left Chicago work has ceased to be a difficult thing to find and has grown to be an increasingly difficult matter to avoid. It has come to be a positive embarrassment, for every day I am stopped by the way and urged to go to work, and it is not easy to refuse men who are most evidently short-handed. I shall set out in the morning with six dollars—five earned from Mr. Barton and one remaining from my last employment—and I shall try to cover a wide strip of country before settling down to another job; but, upon the basis of my past experience, I am sure that on an average of at least once a day in the coming march some farmer will ask me to help him at his work. All through Illinois and from Minneapolis to this point, which is near the Iowa border, this has been my uniform experience.

It was late in the spring when I left Chicago. Almost continuous rains compelled me to defer my start from day to day until the month of May was far advanced, and then I stopped at Joliet and joined for a week a gang of laborers in the works of the Illinois Steel Company. So that it was the first of June before I found myself in the open country once more, after six months as a city workman. Even then the skies continued threatening, and frequent rains forced me from the soft loam of the country roads to a firmer footing on the line of the Rock Island Railway for most of the journey to the Mississippi. I was relatively flush with wages earned at Joliet, and so was under no necessity to stop. But the chance of work never failed me, for not only in the rich farming region about Morris but also in the brick-kilns in the neighborhood of Ottawa and Utica I found abundant offers of a job.

From Davenport I went by rail to Minneapolis, for I had resolved to emerge for a week and attend the National Republican Convention in that city, and not days enough remained, when I reached the river, to admit of my walking there in time for the political gathering. But when the Convention closed I started again, penniless and afoot, on the long march which I have interrupted twice, once when working for a fine old Irish farmer near Belle Plain, and a second time when I accepted Mr. Barton's offer.

It is difficult to pass thus lightly over wide stretches of the journey. Under every casual sentence is a mine of what proved valuable experience to me: The days in the Steel Works, for example, as a member of a gang of foreign laborers and associated with an army of skilled and disciplined workmen, meeting some of them on familiar terms at the boarding-house and at the club, which is an interesting experiment on the part of the company. Then a tramp along the Illinois River through a rich country which teemed with vegetation in the luxuriance of the tropics; and a day's march on the railway with a veritable hobo who had lost his partner and cheerfully took up with me, and who proved to be a delightful fellow, by no means lost to manliness, from whom I parted most regretfully when a job was found for him in a brick-kiln near Ottawa. Then the Convention itself, with its vast array of party organization, and its highly dramatic incidents as affecting the careers of political leaders, and its strong undercurrents of personal and sectional ambition, and the interesting personages, and picturesque figures; all so intensely real and finely typical and keenly alive with national spirit, and splendidly representative of wide, heterogeneous empire bound together in marvellous union. And then a few days spent near Belle Plain, where, driven by the rain from the road, I found shelter in a farmhouse shed and was eagerly seized upon by the farmer as a hired man, until one morning, when, as usual, I had risen at sunrise and had cleaned the stables and curried the horses and was milking the old white cow, the longing for the tramp laid sudden hold of me and soon after breakfast my eager feet were again on the main-travelled road. The storm had passed, the sun was shining from a cloudless sky, and a strong, cool wind was tossing the graceful branches of a cluster of American elms at the roadside as I left the farm, and was blowing through the dewy, dark recesses of a bit of fragrant woodland as I climbed the hill, giving the sense of infinite vitality; when I reached the summit there lay below me, embedded in deep green, one of the hundred exquisite lakes of southern Minnesota, with its rippling surface joyously dancing in the sunlight and adding a touch of magic beauty to the rich, undulating landscape of varying field and forest and deep meadow-land. All about me were the homes of original settlers, where yet live some of the very men and women who, only a generation ago, began to reclaim this paradise from a boundless waste of treeless prairie. Looking out upon it now from such a height, seeing its dense woodlands, the fields rank with standing grain, the farm-houses gleaming white in the sun, the blue sheets of living water, and the distant Minnesota threading its way by towns and villages along fertile banks, one could but dream of its future, when the crudeness will be gone, and close culture will have made it all a very garden of the Lord!

It was through such country as this that my way led me toward the Iowa border. I walked along the valley of the Minnesota by Le Sueur and St. Peter to Mankato, where I spent Sunday, and then, cutting over the ridge, I went by Lake Crystal to Garden City, and so through Vernon and Amboy to Winnebago and on to Blue Earth City.

Not often on the march am I offered a lift, but now and again I am picked up and hurried over some miles of the road, and it was one of the best of these windfalls that befell me on this particular journey. I had left Amboy only a few miles behind, and the long, dusty road stretched far to the south in the direction of Winnebago, where I meant to spend the night. The day was clear and gratefully warm; in the meadows had just begun the metallic music of the mowers, and on the air was the first fragrance of new-mown hay. Soon I caught the sound of the rapid drum of horses' hoofs behind me, and, turning, I saw a gentleman seated in a light open four-wheeler, driving a pair of Indian ponies at a spanking pace in my direction. He drew up beside me, and asked, pleasantly, whether I cared to ride. I lost no time in thanking him and in mounting to the seat at his side; in a moment more we were off at a ten-mile gait, and I was watching with delight the business-like movement of the ponies' pace, with their backs so straight and level that each might almost have held a coin without dropping it.

In the meantime Dr. Brooks (for so I shall call the gentleman, who was returning to Winnebago from a professional visit on the outskirts of his practice) was engaging me in conversation. We very naturally discussed the recent nominations and the issues of the coming general election, and then I had ample opportunity of learning much from him of actual local conditions.

He seemed to me to be singularly well informed. He had travelled widely over the West, and this particular region he had known familiarly since its early settlement. Every farmhouse which we passed he pointed out to me, telling me the farmer's name meanwhile, and something of his history. There was a curious uniformity in the narrative. The life was rough enough in the beginning, no doubt, and of the essence of hard frontier struggle, but it sounded like a fairy tale as he told me of one man and another who had come out in the early days almost penniless from the East or the Middle West or, in some cases, from a foreign country, and had "squatted" on the soil; now these settlers had each a hundred and sixty acres under high cultivation and a good, substantial house and adequate barns and machinery and stock; they could secure money on easy terms at the local bank when they needed it, and the market value of their land had risen two hundred per cent. and even higher in the past twenty-five years.

I should have suspected a land-boomer in the doctor had there been anything aggressive or boastful in his manner, but he was speaking with the simple directness of one who knows and who needs no bluster to disguise ignorance or an ulterior motive.

I was deeply interested, and presently remarked that, coming as I did from the East, the demand for labor on the Western farms had been a surprise to me, and that I was sure that what he was telling me would sound strange to Eastern men, whose preconceptions of agrarian conditions at the West are formed largely from the representations of certain political parties which are recruited from the farming classes.

Dr. Brooks smiled indulgently, and kept his eyes straight ahead while he answered me.

"If you stay out here long enough," he said, "you'll find that there are two kinds of farmers in the West. There is one kind that know their business and that are farmers, and there's another kind that are a good deal more interested in politics than they are in farming. You can put it down as a pretty safe rule that the farmers who have the best knowledge of their business and who are the most industrious and frugal and economical are the least dissatisfied with their conditions and the least anxious to change them by political action, while the more inefficient and shiftless and thriftless a farmer is, the more likely he is to be a violent agitator for financial or political change.

"There seems to be a growing weakness among whole masses of our people," he went on, "which leads them to look to the Government for help instead of to themselves in their own industry and thrift. Not only the farmers are affected by it, for every demand upon the Government for special legislation in the interest of one class or another is evidence of this spirit. We need very much, as a people, to relearn the simple, common-sense maxims of Benjamin Franklin, and to practise them."

I told him something at this point of my past winter in Chicago—of an army of unemployed and of other armies of underpaid workers, and of hosts of sweat-shop victims who could scarcely be said to be lacking in industry and at least a measure of enforced economy.

He listened patiently and with some curiosity, I thought, and when I had done he took up the subject quite eagerly.

"What you say is true enough," he answered. "We live in an age of high civilization, and civilization means city life, and that means great centres of population, and that gives rise to congested labor markets with all the want and misery which you describe. All this, as we have it now, in this country, is of comparatively recent growth, being complicated by the vast numbers of our ignorant immigrant population, and we have by no means adjusted ourselves to it yet. You tell me of an army of unemployed in Chicago, and I can tell you, in reply, of a chronic demand for help in this country-side, which I know well; a demand so great that within the limits of a few neighboring counties we could put fifty thousand men of the right kind to work."

"Yes," I said, "I have met with an amazing demand for workers ever since I left Chicago. But this is the busy season in the country; when the winter comes, would not the men who answered to the demand for agricultural laborers be forced out of employment again and back upon the chance livelihood of the towns?"

"Not unless they preferred it," he replied. "Of course the demand is exceptional at this season. How great it is you can infer when I tell you that, for the next five or six weeks, almost any sort of a man could get his board and a dollar a day, and men of fair skill and experience two and two dollars and a half a day, while the best men will command, for certain kinds of work, as high a wage as three dollars and a half a day besides their keep.

"But the point is that our farmers prefer to hire men by the month for the whole season. They want their help from the 1st of April until the end of November, and they are willing to pay an active, steady fellow twenty dollars a month and everything found, even to his washing. And the demand is so steady and the difficulty of getting good, industrious men so great, that multitudes of our farmers would be willing enough to keep the right sort of hands through the winter months and pay them something for the little that they could find for them to do, for the sake of having them through the spring and summer and autumn when men are hard to find."

. . . .

On the next day I reached Blue Earth City at noon, and spent a dime at a bakery for a midday meal, and then went bowling off toward the

Iowa border at Elmore, which place I counted upon reaching by nightfall.

One dollar remained to me of my last store, and there is a marvellous fund of the feeling of independence in a dollar for one who is familiar with the sense of cowing, unmanning insecurity which comes of being penniless. Already I had stopped once in southern Minnesota, and so large a sum as a dollar would certainly see me well into Iowa, I was thinking, before I should be obliged to halt again to replenish my purse.

It was this view of the case which made me not very hospitable to the offer of a farmer who presently called to me with an inquiry as to whether I would work for him.

The incident was an every-day occurrence, and I felt at first only the usual embarrassment in my effort to evade the offer with some show of reason; but Mr. Barton, for it was he, asked me to at least give it a trial before deciding the matter, and, seeing in the suggestion an admirable opportunity for a short term of service, I replied that, if I concluded to stay at all, I could not consent to remain for longer than a week together, and must be held free to go at the end of the first week if I chose.

Mr. Barton agreed to this immediately, and invited me to a seat beside him on a load of wheat which he was taking to the mill. I said that I preferred to walk on to his farm, the direction of which he had pointed out to me and which was but a couple of miles down a side road.

At first every step which bore me away from the main-travelled road added to my uncertainty of mind. Was I acting wisely in stopping so soon again when I might easily push on for another fifty miles or more? Presently I came to a railway crossing, and sitting down to rest on the roadside, I thought the matter over, and decided finally to go on to the farm.

I had no difficulty in recognizing it from Mr. Barton's description. A row of poplars stood just within a trim picket-fence which enclosed the farm-house yard from the road. Opening the gate I walked up the foot-path which cut its way for a hundred yards through a well-kept lawn, shaded with fruit-trees, to the house standing on the crest of the ridge, surrounded by well-grown maples. It was the usual two-storied, white farm-house with green shutters, having a wing at the side with a porch in front of it overgrown with honeysuckle.

I had come armed with a message for Mrs. Barton from her husband; but for all that, an increasing feeling of embarrassment accompanied me up the walk, and when I knocked at the screen-door which opened upon the porch, I was sorely tempted for a moment to break and run. The inner door was open, and through the screen I could see Mrs. Barton and one of her daughters, whom I shall call Miss Emily, ironing at opposite ends of a table, while another daughter, Miss Julia let us say, was sewing beside them. The faultless order and precision which had appeared in every external detail of the farm were in perfect keeping with what I could see of the interior of the home. It contained only the plainest furniture, but the room was redolent of a clean, cool, inviting comfort, perfectly suited to the needs of men who come in from long, hard work in the heat of the fields. The windows and outer doors were guarded by close-fitting screens; the inner wood-work was painted a light, delicate color, as fresh and clean as though newly applied; and the walls were covered with a simple, harmonious paper which matched well with the prevailing shade in the clean rag-carpet on the floor. A large rocker and a sofa, covered with Brussels carpet, were supplemented by a plentiful supply of plain chairs.

Miss Julia was the first to notice me; putting down her sewing, she stepped to the door and stood facing me from behind the screen.

"Is this Mr. Barton's house?" I asked.

"Yes," said his daughter.

"Well, he has sent me here with a message for Mrs. Barton," I went on; "and wishes me to say that he has hired me to work on the farm."

I was sadly ill at ease by this time, and very sorry that I had not accompanied Mr. Barton to the mill, and then to his home, and left to him all necessary explanations. But it was too late now for regrets, and Mrs. Barton, a sweet-faced, gentle little lady, had joined her daughter at the door.

"I did not know that father meant to hire any more men just now," she said, while a nervous alarm played in her timid eyes at sight of so rough an applicant for work.

I do all that I can to keep a respectable appearance, and never a day passes without the opportunity of a bath in a lake or a wayside stream, and sometimes I am so fortunate as to come upon two or three such chances for refreshment in a day's march. But a long course of wearing the same outer garments and sleeping in brick-kilns and hay-ricks must inevitably produce an effect in clothing which, accompanied by an unshaven face, gives rise to a somewhat scandalous figure.

I could only say, in reply to Mrs. Barton, that her husband's instructions to me were simply to deliver the message which I had brought, and then to await his coming at the farm.

She was by no means reassured, but her hospitality overcame her fear, and, unfastening the screen-door, she opened it with an invitation to me to come in.

The dust on my boots and the general condition of my dress became the instant source of poignant feeling as I stepped upon the speckless carpet and took a seat in a straight-backed wooden chair which shone as though the varnish were but newly dry.

The situation was unmistakably awkward, and, under the disturbing spell of it, I sat very straight in the chair with feet close together and my hands on my knees, anathematizing myself for stopping before there was any need for it and getting myself into a mess. Then I began to cast about for some excuse for going out-of-doors once more, so that I could cut and run for the road.

Out of purest kindness of heart Mrs. Barton was trying to set me at ease. There was some threat of rain, she remarked; and we had had a great deal of rain this spring, she added; and where had I met Mr. Barton? and when did he say that he would be home? she inquired.

My best efforts at responsiveness were dismal failures, and the gloom was growing denser when Miss Julia came to my rescue with a copy of *The Youth's Companion*, which she suggested that I might care to read while waiting.

Over and over again I read sections of continued " boys' stories " and a number of interesting anecdotes and tried to study out certain puzzles, but Mr. Barton did not come. Mrs. Barton and her daughters had immediately resumed their work and their conversation, and, with kind considerateness, had left me to the paper. The hot summer afternoon slowly dragged its length toward evening. Through breaks in rolling clouds, heavy with rain, the sun shone at intervals with piercing heat. A warm, damp, sun-lit air, laden with honeysuckle and the fragrance of strawberry-beds, came floating idly through the open doors and windows, bearing the droning hum of many bees, which was like a low accompaniment to the soft voices of the women. Moving up the lane with the stately, steady motion of an elephant, came presently a huge rick of hay, the horses almost concealed under the over-drooping load and two hired men seated comfortably on top.

Soon after this Mr. Barton arrived, and I went out to meet him in the yard and helped him unhitch the horses. Then he set me to ploughing potatoes in the garden with his youngest son, an intelligent, gentlemanlike lad of seventeen, who, as I discovered later, was preparing for college, for scarcely a day passed that his sister Julia, who teaches school in a neighboring town through the winters, did not find time to help him with his Algebra and Latin. When we were called to supper I found that my case was satisfactorily explained to the family, and that I could now read my title clear to a perfectly comfortable position among them.

Would that I could do justice to the exquisite charm which I began to feel at once in that simple, natural home-life! The men assembled at the call to supper from different quarters of the farm. There were five of us, Mr. Barton and his son Richard, and, besides me, two other hired men, Al, an inflexible Yankee transplanted from far down East, and Harry, a stalwart young Englishman of the grown-up "butcher's boy" variety, whose "h's" had grown to be a source of discomfort to him. We washed on the kitchen porch, and, contrary to the usual custom on the farms, we put on our coats before entering the dining-room, which is also the family sitting-room, where I had found Mrs. Barton and her daughters at work.

The table was spread with clean linen, and a napkin was at each place. Mr. Barton said grace in the midst of a reverent silence, which continued while we began upon a meal abundant enough for a hungry man and dainty enough for a lady.

After supper Harry and I went to fetch the cows, which had to be driven in from a pasture beyond a little river that flows through the farm. There were thirty-seven of them in all to be milked, but Miss Emily and Miss Julia lent a hand, so that it did not take long, and when the horses had been fed and their stalls made ready for the night, we men were free. In the dark, star-lit evening, which followed almost instantly upon the setting of the sun, we walked down to the river for the regular evening bath.

It is early yet for sight of the past week in true perspective, but even now its events take form in memory with a certain natural sequence. With only one exception, clear, radiant summer days have followed one another, days begun for us at five o'clock and spent in the hay-fields when the chores were done and breakfast over. Long days they were, full of hard work in the heat of the meadows, but there was the refreshing cool of the house at mid-day, and a dinner excellent in itself but to our whetted appetites a keen physical delight. And better even than dinner was supper at the end of the day's work in the fields, a delicious supper of cold meats and potatoes and home-made bread and milk and tea, and finally cake with strawberries from the garden. If anything could have been better than that it was when Richard and we three hired men took towels down to the river in the gloom of the early evening, and under the clear summer stars from the high embankment covered with soft turf, with the glitter of fire-flies all about us and the air full of the deep croaking of frogs and the sharp reiterations of the katydids, dove headlong into the dark, cool, flowing water. We swam about for a quarter of an hour and came out with scarcely a trace left in our muscles of the ache of the day's labor and then went to bed to eight hours of deepest sleep.

One was a rainy day when work in the fields was impossible, and we spent it in the barn running some of last year's wheat through the fanning mill and measuring and sacking it ready for shipment. Then Sunday came with its long, peaceful rest. Al and Harry secured each a buggy and were given the use of two of the farm horses, and, in their best Sunday black, they started after the chores were done to take their best girls to church and for a long drive in the afternoon.

The family attend church in Blue Earth City, but their rector has another parish and can preach here only on alternate Sundays. This was his Sunday in the other parish and there was a Sunday-school service here. The restful observance of the day seemed to me in most natural keeping with the deeply religious tone of the family life. Morning worship followed breakfast as usual; then came the preparation for church, and after the morning service and the mid-day meal, which was almost wholly prepared on Saturday, the afternoon was spent in reading. After a light supper in the evening Miss Julia played the harmonium in the parlor, and we all joined in singing hymns until bedtime.

If there is one scene more than another which I shall always remember as eminently characteristic of the household, it surely is that of morning prayers. No pressure of work, even at the very height of the haying season, is allowed to interfere with this act of worship. Immediately after breakfast the family group themselves about the dining-room, drawing off a little from the table, and Mr. Barton, taking down an old Bible from the mantel-shelf, seats himself in the rocker and begins to read the morning lesson.

The passages have been from the prophecy of Ezekiel, and, stronger than any other association with that book, will hereafter be for me the sturdy figure of Mr. Barton in his working clothes, seated in a rocking-chair with his head bowed over a Bible as he reads, reverently, the oft-recurrent phrase:

> The Word of the Lord came again unto me saying, Son of Man, ——

The prayer that followed has been always a simple, earnest appeal for help and guidance. It was as though our dependence upon God and His right to supreme devotion in every act of life was instinctively recognized, and that the worship was a natural expression of love to the Father of us all, thus renewing our wills and bringing us into captivity unto the obedience of Christ, and sending us forth to the duties of the day strong in the sense of the sacredness of work as service to the Lord, and of His presence with us as the source of all life and hope and strength.

Monday was the Fourth of July. Harry and Al were early off again with buggies and best girls, and Mr. Barton invited me to join the family in celebrating the day in town. We hitched a team to a four-seated market wagon, and Mr. Barton's son and his wife, who live on an adjoining farm, drove with us to Blue Earth City, where we were to attend the festivities and go for dinner to the home of a married daughter of Mr. Barton, whose husband is a merchant there.

All along the country roads converging toward the county seat we saw lines of farmers' wagons driving to the common centre. There was great variety of equipage; some were very rude and plain, but others were exceedingly well appointed, and not a few of the low phaeton-buggy type rose to a degree of elegance.

Many of the nearer dwellers were walking in, and as we approached our destination the footpaths were crowded, chiefly with young men and boys, and the town itself, when we entered it, we found thronged with holiday-seekers, the women in light dresses and bright ribbons, the men in sober black, and all of them in their movements giving the sense of heavily conscientious merry-making in spite of the glorious sunshine and the air that throbbed with the joy of a ripe summer's day.

When the horses were put up we fell in with the stream of people moving toward the main street, and there in the thick of the serious throng we stood on the curb watching a procession of local organizations file past, headed by a brass band from Winnebago, all gorgeous in new uniform and led by citizens on horseback as important and uncomfortable as the marshals in a St. Patrick's Day parade.

There was a common movement then of the crowd, through streets which cracked to the continuous discharge of explosives, toward a wood on the outskirts, where a rough booth had been erected and row on row of benches placed before it in the shade. We found seats near to the front, and presently there fell a hush upon the assembly which quieted the flutter of fans and the mingled interchange of neighborly conversation. A procession of little girls in white, with bright blue sashes, each wearing the name of a State or Territory in silver letters across the band of her sailor hat, which had long blue streamers behind, came filing in among the crowd, all intensely trim and self-conscious with their fingers protruding stiffly from white cotton mits. Following them were a minister and a schoolmaster and a small group of other prominent citizens, from among whom towered the tall, massive figure and the clean-cut, rugged, beardless face of an old ex-senator who was the orator of the day.

The little girls grouped themselves on benches which rose like steps from the ground to the level of the floor of the booth, and the citizens took seats assigned them on the platform. One of their number, the chairman of the occasion, introduced the minister, who led the company in prayer. Then the schoolmaster was presented as the reader of the Declaration of Independence. A few explanatory sentences in unconventional English served to bring vividly to the minds of the people the familiar circumstances of the signing of the Declaration, and then in sonorous, ringing voice he read, amid breathless stillness, the deep natural stillness of the woodland, the well-remembered phrases of that great document. There was no applause when he ceased, no outward demonstration of any kind, but through the great still company one could feel the strong movement of the sense of national life.

The ex-senator then rose to speak. He was himself a frontiersman, having known the Northwest from its early settlement and having represented it in Congress a generation ago, and he spoke to people whose history he knew and whose temper he thoroughly understood. It was inspiriting to catch the dominant note of what he said and to watch its effect upon his hearers. There was talk of national growth, but without boasting, and there was very serious reckoning of national problems, but without carping, and there was high appeal to national responsibility, but without canting, and when at the end, out of the wealth of his own personal association with the man, he spoke of Lincoln and enforced all that he had said with homely, cogent teachings drawn from the life and the words of the great apostle of the common people, the assembly was moved and stirred as no other appeal could have affected it.

After this the crowd scattered for dinner, most of the people re-entering the town, and the spirit of fun, no longer to be restrained by a conscientious sense of the seriousness of enjoyment, broke loose in a bit of genuine American horseplay, when a company of boys and young men, in most fantastic disguise, passed in grotesque procession through the streets, and for a few minutes the solemn crowds really lost self-consciousness in true *abandon* to the spontaneous sport.

The Barton family had soon gathered at the married daughter's home, and there with the greatest good cheer we had a picnic dinner of delightful cold meats, and the thinnest of bread and butter, and olives, and dainty home-made cakes, and the reddest of ripe cherries—all served to us as we sat just within the dining-room door or ranged in a semicircle about it in the shade on the lawn.

When it was over everyone was eager to start for the public green outside the town, where the afternoon's sports were to be held. It was not far, and we walked out, but almost a continuous stream of carriages was passing us in a common movement, and when we reached the bridge just outside the town the stream had narrowed to an unbroken line of vehicles moving slowly in single file. At the centre of the bridge which spans a narrow stream below the public green stood an interesting figure as we drew up. He was a tall, lean man of sixty, perhaps, but without a suggestion of old age in his lithe, sinewy frame; a Yankee by every gift of nature, with the sharply inquisitive face of a ferret and shrewd blue eyes with a gleam of humor in them and a little tuft of whiskers on his chin. Every vehicle, as it passed, underwent an interested scrutiny from him, and his whiskers worked comically up and down as he cordially greeted the occupants whom he knew. I was walking with Mr. Barton, and seeing us in the crowd on foot, he eagerly hailed Mr. Barton as a sympathetic old acquaintance.

"John," he said, "I was just thinking as I stood here how I was to the Fourth of July celebration in these parts thirty years ago to-day, in '62. And my gracious, it's hard to realize the change! Why, there warn't a team of horses in the hull county then, and everybody come on foot or else behind a yoke of oxen. But just look at that percession now! There ain't a ox-team in the hull outfit, and ther's some rigs here that's fine enough for the President to ride in."

The common presented a truly festive scene when we reached it. As large as a ten-acre lot, it was covered with a soft, rich turf and enclosed on three sides by beautiful woodland and on the fourth by the main-travelled road. Horses, tied in the shade along the outer rim of trees, were munching hay from piles which had been thrown down before them. Deserted vehicles, ranging from white-canopied prairie-schooners and rough market-carts to the smartest of new buggies, stood idly among the trees, and, with changing lights and shadows playing over them, were groups of picnickers seated on the mossy ground about white table-cloths which bore their viands, and some on rustic benches at rough tables hastily put up for the occasion.

But the dinner-hour was nearly over, and those who had picnicked in the woods were fast joining the crowds who poured in upon the common from the town. The peanut and popcorn and lemonade venders were out in force, and you could hear from many quarters the professional tones of fakirs who invited the crowds to throw rings at walking-sticks, or rubber balls at stuffed dolls for cigars, or to various tests of strength on a variety of ingenious machines. These had their votaries for a time, and there was much laughter and chaffing about the jousts, but the current of the crowd soon set overwhelmingly toward a quarter of the field where a baseball game was being started. Two townships were to play each other. There was no organized nine in either, but a volunteer one was presently secured from both. Not without some difficulty, however. I saw one sturdy young farmer offer his services as pitcher, and his wife, who stood by with her baby in her arms, pleaded with him to desist.

"Charlie," she repeated with whining petulance, "you hadn't ought to; you *know* you hadn't ought to. Just think how stiff and sore you'll be to-morrow. You won't be fit for the haying." But the spirit of the sport was upon Charlie, and not only did he pitch for his township, but he took off his boots and played in stocking-feet to facilitate his base running.

Another young farmer, a gorgeous swell, with his best girl beside him in a phaeton-buggy, and with no end of a white waistcoat and a white cravat, and with a high, stiff collar chafing his well-burned neck, sat spectator to the scene for a time; then, unable to resist longer the demand for a catcher for his township nine, he asked the young woman to hold the horses, and, leaving his coat and waistcoat and high collar in her care, he caught a plucky game without a mask or a breast-pad and with only an indifferent glove, and he threw so well to second that the other side had to give up trying to steal that base.

It was a perfectly delightful game; not at all a duel of batteries, but like a contest between two newly organized rival freshman nines before any team-work has been developed, for both pitchers were hit freely, and there were plenty of the most engaging errors and the wildest of excited throwing, and at times a perfect merry-go-round of frantic base-running, during which it was difficult to keep track of the score.

We drove back to the farm in the cool of the evening in time for supper and the chores before nightfall, and at five o'clock on the next morning began again a day of work in the hay-fields.

DENVER, COL., September 21, 1892.

It is a long cry from Mr. Barton's farm to this beautiful Western city, but the story of the journey can easily be shortened to a few pages, which will serve to picture its salient incidents. Even at this distance of time and space I cannot touch in passing upon my parting with the Barton

THE FOURTH OF JULY—"TWO TOWNSHIPS WERE TO PLAY EACH OTHER."

family without feeling again the sense of homesickness which accompanied me as, in the glory of an early July morning, I walked down the garden-path to the road, with her good-by and a gentle "God bless you!" from Mrs. Barton sounding in my ear, and a last repeated generous offer from Mr. Barton of a permanent home, if I would stay with them, almost following me to the gate. It was the best of the many chances which I have found open to men who are honestly in search of work and willing to work their way industriously and patiently to advancement. I have found many jobs thus far, and in scarcely one of them have I failed to see the means of winning promotion and improved position, while not a few have seemed to me to open a way to considerable business success to a man shrewd enough to seize it and persistent enough to develop it. Often, as I look back upon two two thousand miles of country crossed—apart from the splendor of it—the almost overwhelming impression that it leaves of boundless empire wherein a growing, intelligent, industrious, God-fearing people are slowly working out great ends in industrial achievement and personal character and in national life, an impression which thrills one with a new-found knowledge and love of one's country, with her "glorious might of heaven-born freedom" and the resistless resurgence of her boundless energies, and, notwithstanding all waywardness, a deep-seated, unalterable consciousness of national responsibility to the most high God; apart from all this, the strongest sense which possesses one in any retrospect of a long, laborious expedition like mine, is that of a wide land, which teems with opportunities open to energy and patient toil. Local labor markets there are which are terribly crowded, as I found in Chicago to my cost. Awful suffering there is among workers who are in the clutch of illness, or, bound by ties which they cannot break, are unable to move to more favorable regions; pitiful degradation there is among many who lack imagination to see a way and the energy to pursue it, and who, without the congenital qualities which make for successful struggle, sink into the slough of purposeless idleness; deep depravity and unutterable misery there are in the great congested labor-centres, many of whose conditions are the price which we pay for our economic freedom. But the broad fact remains, that the sun never shone upon a race of civilized men whose responsibilities were greater and whose problems were more charged with the welfare of mankind, among whom energy and thrift and perseverance and ability were surer of their just rewards, and where there were so many and such various chances of successful and honorable career.

In leaving Mr. Barton's farm I found much the same external conditions as those with which I had grown familiar ever since I left Chicago. It was a rich agricultural region, and was inhabited throughout this section in curious, clearly defined communities. In one quarter was a German settlement, and in another a Norwegian, and a Swedish settlement in a third, while I heard of a French colony as a curiosity in another direction, and even an organization of Quakers. But there were native-born Americans in plenty, and chiefly of New England antecedents, as I found in my chance acquaintance with farmers by the way, and from observations of such a charming town as Algona, in northern Iowa, where I spent several days. On every hand it was borne in upon one, not merely from what appeared but from the invariable assurances of those who have lived long in the region, that among the foreign population no fact is more thoroughly established than that of its swift assimilation. So swift and sure a process is this said to be that the children born upon the soil, of immigrant parentage, seem to lose certain physical characteristics which would link them to an alien ancestry, and to take on others which approximate to recognized American types. Their children, in turn, are said to be natives of established character; but of them all none surpasses the first-comers, when once they are settled and grown familiar with our institutions, in a stanch, honest conservatism and in a loyal, patriotic devotion to their adopted country.

It was nearly the end of July when I reached Council Bluffs. I was well worn with walking, for the last two hundred miles I had covered in six days' march, and I was glad enough to stop for a time. But I did not wish to stop there, for my letters for several weeks past had been forwarded to Omaha, and were now awaiting me across the river. Unluckily for me, there was a five-cent toll for foot-passengers on the bridge, and I had only one cent left.

It was the middle of an intensely hot afternoon. I was too tired to begin an immediate search for work, and so I took a seat on a bench in the shade of the public square, near to a fountain which played with a delicious sound of coolness under the trees. The park walks converged toward the fountain as a centre, and thither came the people who wished to rest in the shade or whose errands carried them through the public square. Presently a sharer of my bench got up and walked on, leaving behind him a copy of a local paper, which I eagerly seized upon and read and re-read until I became conscious of the dimming light of early evening. I was stiff and sore with the long, hot, dusty march, and uncomfortable at failing to get the letters upon which I had long counted, and I lacked utterly the energy to surmount even so slight a difficulty. But with the cool of the early evening came the natural hunger bred of a day's march, and the necessity of providing for that and a shelter for the night.

One of the streets of the city through which I had walked to the central square was named Fifth Avenue, and from one point on its pavement I could see through the open windows of a cheap hotel the tables in the dining-room spread for supper. There were screens at the windows and light cotton curtains, and the table-linen appeared clean and the shaded depth of the room looked to me, from the blistering pavement, like the subdued, fragrant coolness of real luxury.

I retraced my steps to the hotel and asked for work, but there was none for me. I found the way to the stables and applied there, but an old man with a long nose and a white, patriarchal beard told me that they were in no need of more men. This was very different from my experience in the country, where everyone was in need of men and one had not to ask for employment but was everywhere urged to accept it, and I began to wonder whether for the sake of work I should be forced out again to the farms.

Near this "Fifth Avenue" hotel I had noticed a livery-stable which fronted on one street and extended through to another bordering the public square. I went there next, and found its keeper seated comfortably in the wide, open doorway. Taciturn and non-committal at first, he confessed eventually to his needing a man in addition to the two already at work in the stable, and, after some questioning, he told me to come back at nine o'clock that evening and receive his decision.

I was supperless and without the means of securing anything to eat, and there remained an hour and a half before nine o'clock. In this predicament I had the good fortune to chance upon a delightful public library on the second floor of a building overlooking the square. It was like the library at Wilkesbarre in its charming accessibility; and, without a trace of the feeling of weariness or hunger left, I was reading ravenously, when, by some happy chance, I caught sight of a clock that was almost on the stroke of nine. With thanks, which were exceedingly short and abrupt, I returned the books to an attendant in the library and then bolted for Mr. Holden's livery-stable. He was standing in the door when I came up, and, without preliminary remarks,

"I will take you on," he said, and then he added, almost without a pause,

"I will give you twenty dollars a month and arrange for your board at the hotel [indicating the "Fifth Avenue" one], or thirty dollars a month and you manage for your own keep. You will sleep in the loft over the harness-room."

Without a moment's hesitation I accepted the first offer, and wishing us good-night Mr. Holden left the stable in charge of Ed, one of the other hired men, and me.

It was too late to get anything to eat at the hotel, and so I sat up with Ed and helped unhitch the horses and put up the traps as they came in. The last horse was housed by eleven o'clock. I then found that with the aid of a hose a capital bath was possible in the carriage-washing section of the stable, and then I went to bed on a cot in the well-ventilated loft, very content in the knowledge that I had found a good place and should have a breakfast in the morning.

Ed called me at five o'clock as he was going below, and when I followed him he assigned me the two rows of stalls next to his own, which contained twelve horses and which were to be my first care. All these stalls had to be cleaned and the horses fed before I was at liberty to go to breakfast, and it was with a royal appetite that about seven o'clock I applied at the hotel. It was a very decent hostelry, largely made use of by farmers apparently. I was at once accepted as an employé of Mr. Holden, and served to an excellent meal by a trim little waitress, at one of the very tables which I had looked in upon on the previous afternoon with such genuine longing, and with the feeling of its belonging to a degree of luxury far beyond my reach.

The twelve horses which had fallen to my share had all to be curried after breakfast and got ready for the day's orders. Calls for vehicles began to arrive in the middle of the morning, and they continued to come at intervals throughout the day, so that there was much hitching and unhitching to interfere with regular tasks.

Jake, the third hired man, was boss in the absence of the owner. He had long been in Mr. Holden's employ, and had a wife and several children in a home of his own somewhere in the outskirts of the city. All the feeding, and cleaning, and currying, and carriage-washing, fell to Ed and me, while Jake, in addition to a general superintendence, had as his special trust the care of all the harnesses. He took great pride in them, and certainly kept them in admirable condition. Ed was chief carriage-washer and next in command under Jake, while to me, when my regular work was done, fell the odd jobs of keeping the carriages oiled, and watering the horses at the proper hours, and lending a hand at the unloading of the hay and feed as they came in —of holding myself in readiness, in short, to do anything that anyone in the stable asked of me. A very good position it was, as I very soon found. I had no great difficulty in learning the various tasks, and in a stable which, even in the fierce heat of August, was always comfortable, and at forms of work which were always interesting, and with every cost of living provided for, I was clearing five dollars a week.

By no means were the demands of our work continuous. Nearly every afternoon we had an hour or two or even three together, when there was little to be done. I found a book-shop across the way from the stable, where second-hand books could be rented at the rate of six cents a week and the books exchanged as often as you pleased.

Then in the evenings, when we all had supped in turn, and the stalls had been made ready for the night, and the traps sent out in answer to the evening trade, Jake and Ed and I used to sit out in front, within easy hearing of the telephone-bell, with our chairs tilted against the stable-wall and our feet caught by the heels on the chair-rounds, and there we talked by the hour together, until Jake went home and left Ed and me to care for the outstanding horses and traps, and lock up the stable for the night.

I was at a disadvantage in these conversations. Jake and Ed were Yankees, both of them shrewd, hard-headed, steady fellows. Jake was the father of a family, and Ed an unmarried man of three-and-thirty, who was working with all his might to pay off the mortgage on his father's farm back in Illinois. Both of them had had some district-school training, but nothing beyond, and while they had a perfectly intelligent knowledge of affairs which concerned them as men and as citizens, their farther intellectual horizon was limited.

One evening as we sat under the stars the talk turned upon astronomy, and Ed began to comment disparagingly upon the claims of astronomers of an ability to weigh the heavenly bodies, and to measure their distances from one another and from the earth. Jake heartily agreed with him, and insisted that not until a line could be carried from one to another, and each star weighed accurately in a scale, would he put any confidence in these pretended results. My attempt to point out that there were methods of determining weight and distance other than the very direct ones which they insisted upon, was very damaging to my reputation for intelligence, and was set down as of a piece with the general ignorance which I had shown in the work of a livery-stable. And when, later in the discussion, I stood out for the validity of the doctrine of the conservation of energy, against Ed's immediate demonstration of its falsity in the heaps of refuse which he pointed out were thrown every day from our stable alone, and which must to some degree effect a variation in the totality of matter —I found that my position in the crew was threatened with unpleasantness.

But in reality both Jake and Ed were exceedingly friendly to me. They were at pains from the first to teach me my work, and to give me a hint now and again, which counted for much, in the matter of getting the job well in hand. Soon the days began to go by with astonishing rapidity. I had told Mr. Holden that I should not be with him very long, and at the end of two weeks I left the livery-stable with ten dollars and one cent in my pocket, minus the twelve cents which were due for book-hire, and which I felt had been well invested.

At Omaha I stopped for several days. Like Minneapolis and Denver, of the Western towns which I have seen, it is a splendid type of the American city of a generation's growth, where almost miraculous progress has been made in actual material development, and where the higher demands of civilization are responded to with an energy and enthusiasm which are inspiring, and which are prophetic of splendid results.

Then out I walked one perfect afternoon upon the level plains of Nebraska, with wild sunflowers in prolific bloom and square miles of Indian-corn fields standing lusty and stark to the very horizon with puffs of belated pollen powdering the warm red light, and the corn-silk turning black at the ends, and the long, drooping, cane-like blades beginning to show the ripe yellow of the autumn.

The mere writing down the bare fact of the journey stirs in one's blood again the joy of that free life. The boundlessness of the world and your boundless enjoyment of it, the multiplicity of abundant life and your blood-kinship with it all, some goal on the distant horizon and your "spirit leaping within you to be gone before you then!" There is scarcely a recollection of all the tramp through Illinois and Minnesota and Iowa and eastern Nebraska which is without the charm of a free, wandering life through a rich, beautiful country. What I saw of the wealth of a fertile region in central Illinois I found again enhanced in beauty and productiveness in southern Minnesota, and, varying in outward configuration but scarcely less attractive or fruitful, across the face of Iowa, losing only its variety as it modulates in Nebraska to the plains which slope upward gently for five hundred miles to the Rockies.

My mind throngs with the pictures of splendid cultivation, of leagues on leagues of farms which were had for the taking or were purchased from the Government at a dollar and a quarter an acre, and where I saw countless comfortable homes and fields white to the harvest, with no demand so strong as the one for laborers.

It was not wealth in the sense of opulence, but it was the plenty which is beyond the fear of want that marked the character of that broad domain. The poor were there, and the suffering and the deeply discontented, and there were hard conditions of life and very sordid ones, but never the hopelessness which gives to town-bred destitution its quality of despair. In the gradual development of actual resources about you appeared to be the remedies of most of the obvious ills.

"This is a rich region," said a handsome young farmer who had offered me a lift one blistering hot day in Iowa—"this is a rich region, and it is more than rich, it is reliable. We never know a total failure of crops here; we can always make a living. This country, for hundreds of miles around, is a garden, and we live in the heart of it." And he was one of the discontented. I only regret that I have not space here for his interesting account of the tyranny of capital under which, from his point of view, the farmers live and work, and the imperative need of monetary reform as a means of bringing about their emancipation.

It was the thing which I had heard many times from many farmers at the West, only never presented with quite equal cogency before. The opposite views had been represented to me, and there was often a singular alternation of presentation within the course of a day or two, and I had come to recognize a comical uniformity between condition and views.

If I chanced upon a farmer who had no particular quarrel with the existing order of things, who was conservative and cautious and sceptical of the efficacy of change, I was quite sure to find that he was an admirable farmer, thrifty and energetic and industrious, with a thorough knowledge of his business down to a frugal care of minor details. But if, on the other hand, I fell in with a farmer who was clamorous for radical economic change, on the ground that he and his class were being ruined by the injustices of existing economic conditions, I soon began to feel a suspicion, which all my observation deepened into a conviction, that the man of this type was fundamentally a poor farmer; his buildings and fences were sure to be out of repair, and his stock showed signs of suffering for want of proper care, and the weeds grew thick in his corn, and his machines were left unhoused and suffered more from rust than ever they did from wear.

This would be absurd as a generalization with any claim to wide applicability, as would be any generalization based upon my casual experimenting; it was the comical uniformity of my experience in this case as in some others that impressed me.

The real difficulties of the situation for many of the Western farmers one could not fail to see. Apart from material misfortune and apart from sickness and ill-luck, there is the inexorableness of conditions which seem at times to hold them to a life of servitude with no escape from unprofitable drudgery, and from the carking care which burdens men who are hopelessly in the clutch of debt.

I grew impatient at times with the tone of Philistine patronage and superiority adopted by the sturdier farmers. Theirs was the harder work no doubt and theirs the shrewder carefulness and the more provident handling of their instruments, but even hard-won success is sometimes so strangely blind to the obligations which arise from the fact that subjective difficulties are as real and are often far more difficult of mastering than those which are objective. Often it appears at its worst as, with utter disregard of the duty of helpfulness, it chants its heartless creed in the terms of the fore-ordination which lightly dooms all the non-elect of high efficiency to the deep damnation of beggarly dependence or of endless failure in the struggle of life.

Two hundred miles west of Omaha the wages earned at the livery-stable in Council Bluffs were exhausted, and I was obliged to look for another job with which to replenish my store. I was following the line of the Union Pacific Railway, and, having spent my last cent one mid-day for a dinner, I went up to the first section-boss whom I met in the afternoon's walk and asked him for a job. He was a burly Irishman of massive figure. Without a moment's hesitation he told me that he was in no need of a man, but that Osborn, the boss of the next westward section, the thirty-second, with head-quarters at Buda, he knew was looking for one.

About eight miles farther on I came upon Osborn and two men at work near the little station at Buda, a scant four miles east of Kearney, and it was as the Irishman had said, for instantly, upon my application, Osborn accepted me as a section-hand at wages of a dollar and a quarter a day for ten hours' work, and offered me board and lodgings at his home for three dollars a week, an arrangement with which I instantly closed.

For the remaining afternoon and until six o'clock I lay resting in the tall prairie grass in the shade of the railway station, and at seven o'clock on the next morning I began a term of three weeks' service as a section-hand under the orders of Osborn the boss, and with a strapping young Irishman, "Cuckoo" Sullivan by name, as my partner.

That was the last long stop before I reached Denver. And now, as I am about to leave this city for the remaining thousand miles of my journey, I look back over a summer and autumn spent in the country and in towns and villages of the thousand miles from the seaboard to Chicago, and then a winter and a spring within the limits of the foremost city of the Middle West, and then a summer in the vast farming region between Chicago and Minneapolis and Denver. A thousand miles remain, but with what eager anticipation do I look forward to them! I shall strike in among the mountains, and then leave to the natural development of events the determining of my westward journey. Whichever course it takes, my way must lie through the frontier, and by force of necessity I must come into contact with a life which is something other than the monotonous daily round of work. There will be mining regions with the chances of prospecting, and the ranches with the wide range of their free living, and Indian reservations to be crossed, and many lonely mountain-trails to be followed.

It was never without interest and charm, this summer's walk with its intervals of work, over a thousand miles of the mid-continent. It varied in beauty with every day's march, and even the dead level of the Nebraska prairies as the Indian corn-fields grew thinner and faded completely into boundless plains of sage-brush, where the alkali lay white on the glittering soil, and the bleaching skeletons of cattle joined their mute appeal to the cloudless sky for water to quench a burning thirst—even here was an attraction and an interest of its own.

Days ago I caught sight of the mountains rising from out the level plain, and, through the haze of distance and above the mists which shrouded their gaunt sides, I saw their "silent pinnacles of aged snow" appearing clear against the blue of high heaven. Now, as I have drawn nearer in this marvellous air, a hundred miles of the range stand out in glorious vividness of color and of every detail of configuration, and my heart leaps again to the joy of their companionship, and I realize with a tingling of blood that the best of the journey, in any sense of adventure, lies before me in the life which they hold upon their slopes and fertile valleys, and in the gloomy depths of their vast cañons.

CHAPTER VIII

FROM DENVER TO THE PACIFIC

PHŒNIX, ARIZONA,
January 3, 1893.

JOURNEYING by no pre-arranged plan, but directing my course according to the promptings of chance circumstances, I have wandered far from a direct westward line from Denver to the sea, but I have come by a way that has furnished in experience all that I could have hoped.

The very first step from Denver carried me out of a due westward course. In the vague, ill-defined manner of a tenderfoot, I knew that Cripple Creek was a relatively new mining camp, and that it lay somewhere beyond Pike's Peak, and I light-heartedly dreamed that, being a new camp, it was just the place for a new-comer; so, late in September, I set out from Denver with Cripple Creek in view.

For seventy miles or more I went south, the earlier part of the walk leading me through the sandy tract which begins abruptly at the very edge of the fresh green lawns that mark the end of irrigation in the city. The road which first I followed gradually faded out on the open plain. Then I cut diagonally across country in the direction of the foot-hills.

Near to the city as it was this bit of country, after weeks of drought, was like a veritable desert. Underfoot was the hot alkali dust, where grew the short plain-grass that lay whitened in tufts of crisping curls, as though dead beyond all reviving. Thick on every side was a growth of stunted cactus, well in keeping with the character of the plain, while the deeper green of the long, sharp Spanish needles was a sad mockery of fertility. Along occasional ravines, washed deep by sudden, rain-fed streams whose beds now lay stony and parched and baked under the hot sun, were here and there clusters of scrub oaks, small in growth but with their wiry branches spreading a luxuriance of small oval leaves which supplied the welcome of a shadow in a desert land. At intervals among the dry, tufted grass small sand-heaps appeared, and above them the heads of prairie dogs, piping shrill warning of suspicious approach, or darting in swift flight from one burrow to another.

For some miles I walked through such a region, growing momentarily thirstier as the sun beat down upon me and I inhaled the alkali with the sensation of having eaten soap. The only sign of habitation that I saw was a shanty, a mere shell of boards tacked upon a frame and standing ten feet square, perhaps, and seven feet high. The hill on which it stood sloped to a deep ravine, and past the shanty-door wound a smaller water-course, where a line of scrub-oaks grew, suggesting the presence of a spring. But the bed was dry and yawned in thirsty cracks, and no source of water could I find, although the shanty was plainly inhabited; for the door was heavily padlocked, and a half-starved dog, with a broken leg, limped from his kennel among some old soap-boxes and barked a feeble protest against my approach, and a few fowls were squatting in the dust in the shade of the scrub-oaks, or scratching for food in the dry grass near the shanty.

Two or three miles farther on I came out upon a highway, which follows the general direction of the Santa Fé and the Rio Grande railways, as they parallel each other to the south. Here was a very different tale to tell. There were many ranches along the route with abundant supplies of water from artesian wells, apparently, whose streams were playing ceaselessly over gardens and at the roots of thrifty fruit-trees. I passed through a number of typical Western villages on the march, and once through an encampment of a regiment of regulars, whose officers were at mess and many of the men lying at full length on the ground with their legs protruding from under the slight shelter tents, while foraging expeditions could be seen bargaining among their out-houses with the neighboring ranchmen, with all the womenkind and children in interested attendance.

The road was gradually drawing nearer to the foot-hills. Instead of a hundred miles of unbroken mountain-range, from Long's to Pike's Peak, that seemed to rise abruptly from the plain only an hour's walk away, I began to be aware of the magnificent distances so strangely disguised in that clear, rarefied air, and to appreciate altitudes by comparison with lesser heights. The view lost in extent, only to gain in the grander outlines of splendid detail. And with the nearer view there grew clear the marvellous coloring in the exposed strata and the fantastic shapes which mark the play of erosion among the rocks. There were deep saffrons and reds of every hue, from a delicate flush to crimson; there were browns and grays without number, and a soft cream color deepening to yellow, and now and then a jut of rock that in certain lights appeared milk-white. To boundless variety in color was added a weird charm of form with which the imagination could play endlessly. Sitting a rugged bowlder with the dainty poise of an egg upon a conjurer's finger would appear a round-bellied Hindu god in solid stone, and near him, in exquisitely delicate tracery, a flying buttress or the tapering spire of a cathedral, while crowning some sheer height in all the glory of gorgeous color would rise the grim towers and battlements of a mediæval fortress.

It was after nightfall on Saturday evening when I entered Colorado Springs. With the aid of the electric lights I soon gathered an impression of a considerable town of large hotels and wide, regular thoroughfares, with the squares built up, many of them, in detached villas, after the manner of Eastern summer-resorts by the sea. In the course of a walk about the town I came upon an empty prairie schooner, which stood in a cluster of trees on the outskirts of an open square, and creeping under the sheltering canopy I slept there for the night.

The Sunday which followed I remember chiefly for its glorious sunshine and the view which I had in the morning of Pike's Peak. Its summit seemed to leap into the sky as it rose stark and bald above the timber-line, and yet there was infinite repose in its splendid height, standing out clear and majestic in the full rays of the morning sun. I remember, too, a service in a well-filled church, and an odd reminder in its worshippers of the Eastern seaboard, and the exciting expectancy of chance sight of some familiar face, and, finally, the figure of a girl, who, entering after the service had begun, slipped noiselessly into a seat at my side in a pew near the door. A wonderful vision she was of what men mean when they speak feelingly out here of "God's country," for you no sooner saw her than there flashed into sight the long vista of the avenue as it heaves to the lift of Murray Hill. You could see her there—and can see her superior nowhere under heaven—with the light streaming in red, level rays through the side streets on a late afternoon in the cold, crisp air of autumn, with the tan of a summer on the New England coast upon her, and her exquisite figure instinct with the vitality which comes of yachting and hard riding, her frock and jacket fitting her like a glove, and her clear, frank eyes looking you straight between your own and making you feel in her presence what a clean, wholesome, manly thing is life! She little dreamed, as she cordially shared her prayer-book with me, how deeply indebted to her I was for being so fine a type of the finest and handsomest women in the world, and how much

I owed her for so fair a vision before I launched into the mining regions of the frontier.

Monday dawned as bright as Sunday had been, and by eight o'clock I reached Manitou and was ready to begin the ascent of Pike's Peak. There was a wide choice of route, for there was a road, and a well-beaten trail, and the bed of the cog railway. I took to the railway as the most unmistakable and very likely the directest course.

With infinite engineering skill the first ascent of the cog-road is cut as a ledge along the side of a deep gorge or cañon, down which rushes a mountain stream of considerable volume. Following the great turns of the cañon the road ascends in the shadow of huge rocks, that tower straight above it or slope in a more gradual rise, furnishing place for the cabin of a miner or of some lover of camp life. The mountain-sides are dark with evergreen, which seems to grow deep-rooted in the rock, clinging at times to a bare, protruding ledge with naked roots thrust deep into crevices where soil and moisture are found. The quaking aspen shares this bare subsistence with the pine, and, green with the rich green of late summer at the mountain-base, it marked all the stages of the autumn in the ascent, until at the timber-line I found its leaves turned yellow and fast falling to the ground.

About two miles below Windy Point I had the good luck to overtake a miner, who had been spending Sunday with his family near Colorado Springs and was now on his way back to work in Cripple Creek. He was not at all encouraging as to the prospect of my finding work in the camp, but before we parted at Windy Point he gave me careful directions about the way, and I began to feel, in his calling me " partner " and in his talk of " claims " and " gulches " and " blazed trails," my first intimation of nearing the mining regions of the Rockies.

We separated where the cog-road sweeps around the southern side of the mountain, only because I was bent on reaching the summit before going on to Cripple Creek. All the difficulty of the ascent I found concentrated in the last hour of climbing. It no longer was a matter of steady uphill work, but a succession of short spurts wherein one breathed more by accident than design. You were not tired in the least, but, at an altitude of some 14,000 feet, your breath failed completely in an upward walk of fifty yards, and you were obliged to stand still, panting until respiration became normal again.

Exactly at twelve o'clock I reached the summit, where I found a piercing cold wind blowing and small drifts of snow lying in crevices among the rocks on the northern slope; in an air as clear as crystal my eye swept boundless mountain-ranges to the north and west and south and a boundless plain below, where, at the foot of the mountain, lay Colorado Springs, a few, dim squares formed by the intersection of faint parallel lines at right angles to one another. Above the rushing of the wind among the grim, naked crags which form the summit, a wind, which at that solemn height suggests the sweep of awful interstellar spaces, the only sound I heard was the voice of an attendant in a stone building near by as he sang, again and again, the chorus of "Ta, ra, ra, ra, boom, de ay!"

I remained at the summit as long as I dared, held by the fascination of the view; then I returned to Windy Point and went down the south face of the mountain and across a beautiful grass-grown level to the brink of another descent, where, according to my miner friend of the morning, I should find a blazed trail. I found instead the sheer side of a cañon. I followed the brink of the precipice for some distance, and coming at last upon a less abrupt point, I plunged down and made my way over shelving rock and fallen trees until I eventually chanced upon the trail. This I followed to the deep bed of the cañon, where I saw some claims staked out and lost my way in a tangle of cattle trails. It was growing dark, and there was no sign of the journey's end, but I knew the general direction of Cripple Creek, and the moon was at its first quarter.

Even the cattle-trails failed at last, and in the dark forest I was soon lunging on over bowlders and rotting trees and the *débris* of a mountain wood in the direction of the camp, hoping, meanwhile, that I should not be obliged to spend the night in the open, for at that altitude in late September it was turning " wondrous cold."

Down one ridge and up another I forged ahead through the tangled undergrowth of the forest, and at last, from the top of a rock which cleared the trees about it, I caught the glimmer of a light through the window of a cabin a mile or two away.

It was an ore-crushing camp I found; I was made most cordially welcome, and given a bed on a pile of blankets in a tent where slept the half dozen men of the crew. They were a hearty, healthy lot of young farmers to all appearances, and I gathered that they had come up from Kansas at the time of the " boom " at Cripple Creek.

A walk of only four or five miles carried me into the camp after breakfast next morning. The first view that I had of it was very striking, I thought, as I looked down upon it from a sudden turn in the road. The settlement lay in the southeastern bend of a basin whose bottom was as flat as the prairie and well turfed. The hills rose quite bare for some distance about it, and their sides looked oddly, as though heavy artillery had been playing upon them, for they were peppered with holes made by prospectors, with loose earth and stones lying about them.

Straggling lines of wooden buildings followed roughly the rude course of a long, dusty street, which ran southward to the mouth of a gulch and then turned abruptly west until it lost itself on the level. Some of these buildings were log-cabins, of much solidity, and others were trim, substantial frame houses, neatly painted; but for the most part they were crude, unpainted shanties, and there were many tents dotting the hillsides, and a few lines of light structures which marked the outlines of prospective streets branching from the main thoroughfare.

The camp itself wore an air of desertion, which was only confirmed when I entered it. There were few persons in the streets, and some of the houses were abandoned. The picture formed a very welcome contrast when I saw a school-mistress step to the door of a long log-cabin, with grass growing thick on its roof, and ring a bell to summon a troop of little children, who came running and shouting from unexpected quarters, dispelling at once the loneliness and quiet of the place.

It was but nine in the morning, and I had the full day in which to look for work. There were very few mines in actual operation in the neighborhood, I found, but I visited all of them, asking for any form of unskilled labor.

I was struck at once with the wide difference in bearing out here, as compared with the East and Middle West, on the part of employers toward workingmen. It did not take long to discover that there were scores, possibly hundreds, about the camp who were out of work, and yet the manner of men to whom I applied for employment was most uniformly courteous, and courteous in the best possible way. Invariably I found myself treated as a fellow-man, and that was a wonderful salve to one's self-respect. There was no effort at politeness, but simply an instinctive recognition of fellowship.

" Why, no, I ain't got nothing that I can give you to do now, partner," a boss would say. " You see it's like this——," and then would follow a friendly talk on the general situation, as one man might naturally explain a case to another.

It was all easily intelligible. The camp had enjoyed its " boom " during the last autumn and winter, but especially through the spring. There had been the usual rush of fortune-seekers, with an uncommon preponderance, however, of farmers from Kansas and Nebraska. Some silver had been found, but much more gold-bearing quartz and a little placer deposit. Evidently Cripple Creek is to become a gold-producing centre, but the ore discovered so far is of rather a low grade. Very little of it can be worked at a profit so long as it must meet the great cost of transportation by mule train to the railway at Cañon City, more than thirty miles away. There are two railways now making for the camp; so soon as they have entered the region and reduced greatly the present cost of transportation and other costs attached to mining there, many claims will rise instantly to the position of paying properties which cannot now be worked to any profit whatever. The miners were all sanguine of rich results when once this period of waiting has been tided over.

But in the meantime it was " hard scrapping " for a living. There were golden prospects, but very little immediate work, and the best of prospects makes but an indifferent diet. After a long and tiring round of mines, I went at last, very hungry, in the direction of an ore-crushing outfit, which stood in the bottom of the basin near the camp. Nothing in the way of work was to be had there, but I was fortunate enough to see an old prospector test some placer diggings, deftly washing out a panful of soil, and exhibit the few tiny specks of gold deposit at the last.

Turning back to the camp I began a round of the lodging- and eating-houses and shops, in the hope that some opening might be found. But there was as little demand for help there as I had found about the mines, with the exception of one cheap chop-house, where a notice was exposed advertising for a dish-washer. I applied for the place with high hope of getting it, but the buxom, stolid woman who was in charge, met every advance on my part with an unvarying "No" and with nothing more, and, worsted at last, I was obliged to withdraw.

It was by mere accident that I drifted in the evening to Squaw's Gulch, and fell in there with an old prospector who was working out the assessment on his claim, and who offered me food and shelter in his cabin and a certain share in the mine if I would help at the work.

When, finally, I left Cripple Creek, Créede was my next objective point. Down the mountain road in the direction of Cañon City I went, but I did not get so far as that on the first day's march, for I was late in leaving Cripple Creek and darkness overtook me when some fifteen miles of the way yet remained. For some time I had been following an excellent road which wound through a charming valley in its easy descent to the plain. The valley narrowed presently, leaving but a few hundred yards between the steep sides of mountains, which hemmed it in. A stream was flowing swiftly along its rocky bed, and the evening winds were blowing with the sound of a low murmur among the pines as I pressed on in the darkness through the ankle-deep dust of the road.

It was not a light that first attracted me, but the black bulk of a cabin that seemed to rise suddenly from the ground on my right. Soon I saw that it was occupied, and, going near, I found a side door wide open, with lamp-light streaming from it into the night. For a moment I stood unnoticed in the doorway, and could see at a glance the heavy wooden table and the chairs and the large, old-fashioned cooking-stove, and the prints tacked to the walls, and the cooking utensils hanging behind the stove, which made up the furniture. The floor was of well-planed boards, which had been scrubbed white, and the whole room partook of the atmosphere of cool, wholesome cleanliness, characteristic of the best New England kitchens. And the figure that stood ironing at the table in the centre of the room was in perfect keeping with her surroundings. A tall woman, evidently past fifty, of strong, muscular frame, and with a face of high intelligence, wearing in repose an expression of sweetness and of lady-like serenity, which gives to the wrinkled faces of some women so high-bred and distinctive a grace.

I knocked on the open door, and she looked up in no wise disturbed at sight of a stranger there. I explained my purpose and asked whether there was anything that I could do in payment of shelter and a breakfast. She drew out a chair from the wall and invited me to be seated, saying that we should consider that matter in the morning. For some time I sat talking with her, and while she ironed she conversed in an easy, natural manner, bred of the free life out here, which has in it all the charm of the directness and simplicity of a true woman of the world.

Presently she invited me to meet her husband, and, leading the way, she took me to an inner room, where, in a rocking-chair before a wood fire on a large, open hearth, sat a man of about her own age. He looked his character perfectly, for he was a hard-handed frontiersman of rugged, sinewy frame, with hair and beard unkempt, apparently, but you saw at once that he was faultlessly clean, as was the beautifully whitewashed room in which he sat, with its muslin ceiling sagging here and there. He did not rise to meet us, only turned a little in his chair and allowed his paper to rest on his knees as, for a moment, he fixed upon me his dark eyes full of the unfathomable mystery and sadness of life. I marked in him at once the same well-bred repose and self-possession which I had noticed in his wife.

We talked at first of indifferent matters until I, keen with interest in the shelves of books which I saw about the walls, and other shelves on which fragments of many kinds of rock were lying in order and all labelled, ventured an inquiry as to whether he was interested in geology.

With shame do I confess that there was in my witless head at the moment a patronizing, supercilious curiosity at the fact that the rough old backwoodsman who sat before me in his shirt-sleeves should have surrounded himself with objects about which he could know so little. I got it full between the eyes.

"Yes," he said quietly, in answer to my inquiry, "I have been a good deal interested in the science for the last twenty-five years, for my ranch turned out to be remarkably rich in paleontological remains and in geological material, particularly of the cretaceous period."

And then with natural straightforward ease he began to go into details, describing to me his first chance discoveries on the ranch when, soon after the civil war, he had moved out from New England and pre-empted a homestead here. It was a fascinating narrative most modestly told, of one discovery leading to another, of interest awakened in an unknown field, of a book secured here and there, of a widening intellectual horizon, and of an awakening to undreamed-of worlds of infinite interest and wonder, of communication with men of science, of personal acquaintance with some of them, and finally of a recent visit to a great Eastern university where the best of his specimens are all mounted in the Geological Museum. Now and then he would reach down a fragment of rock bearing the impress of some paleontologic form and would illustrate in concrete detail. In a single sentence he would be far beyond my shallow depth of meagre, book-learned science, but he generously paid me the compliment of taking for granted that I knew, and he could hardly have had a more interested listener.

In the morning he was driving to Cañon City and he invited me to go with him. On the way he talked of science, geology this time, and he amply illustrated what he said by means of the vast exposed strata which rose tier on tier in the sheer sides of the cañon through which we drove to the plain.

From Cañon City I crossed the Arkansas and struck up into the mountains in the direction of Green Mountain Valley. The weather had favored me marvellously. Not since I had left my job as a navvy at Buda on the Union Pacific Railway had I been hampered by a drop of rain. Down through Colorado and among the mountains so far, I had enjoyed an unbroken succession of most delightful autumn days. But the clouds began to gather now as I made my way through Green Mountain Valley. I well remember the cold, threatening morning of October 18th, when I walked through the all but deserted mining camp of Silver Cliff. That night I spent with a ranchman in the heart of the rich valley; when I set out in the morning snow had begun to fall, and I realized, with some concern, that I still had a considerable range to cross and several days' march to the mining camp of Créede.

I did not get very far on that memorable 19th. For an hour or two I had no difficulty in keeping the road, but the snow had thickened to a blinding storm by then, and the wind was fast rising to a gale. Anything like that snow-fall I have never seen. A whole landscape was blotted out as in a moment, and the road which just now was a clearly defined way through the valley became almost instantly indistinguishable in the general sweep of flaky whiteness, over which fresh snow was falling so fast that you could not see ten yards ahead.

I found out afterward that I had been very near to losing my way on a plain where I might have wandered in endless circles, for the falling snow instantly covered one's tracks and left no trace of the way one had come. As it was, seeing that it was impossible to make headway in such a storm, I struck out for shelter, and before I realized my actual danger I ran up against a ranchman's cabin.

It was a very small affair, with a lean-to for a kitchen, but a dark little German woman with a soft musical voice, who opened the door, bade me a most cordial welcome; and as she placed a chair for me before the fire, she assured me, again and again, of the anxiety that she should feel if one of her boys were caught out in such a storm, and of her gratitude to anyone who might shelter him. I began to understand that I was coming in for a good deal of vicarious attention, for she took my wet coat and boots to dry them in the kitchen and insisted upon my drinking some hot tea.

It was a very cosy nest into which I had fallen. The ranchman himself was a mild-mannered German, with a blonde beard and dreamy eyes, and an air of abstraction, who looked up to his wife in all things, for she was vastly his superior. Two boys were at home, magnificent young fellows of about fifteen or sixteen, handsome, clear-eyed, ruddy-faced lads, with the carriage of men who are most at ease in the saddle. And visiting her prospective in-law relations, was the fiancée of the oldest son, who is a merchant, I think, in West Cliff. It was worth far more than all the risks of the storm to see her. She was a Swedish girl in the very bloom of youth, and her light hair had in it the living fire of red gold. It was brushed straight back and done up behind her head in a great mass of interweaving coils in which the light played superbly. Some shorter hairs had worked loose, and these fell in almost invisible curling threads of gold about her white forehead. Her cheeks were of translucent pink, and her rich red lips were as delicately formed as in the Psyche of Praxiteles.

The child was perfectly unaware of her beauty. In her wide, blue eyes there was not a suggestion of self-consciousness. And the family about her seemed not to consider it either; perhaps they all regarded it, as the poor instinctively accept much in life, as belonging to the natural order and not to be counted in an individual sense.

We had a jolly time that day playing games and telling stories far into the evening. It was perfectly clear next morning, with a warm sun fast melting the deep snow. I could not venture on, however, for the way was too obstructed, and in another day spent in the cabin I got on quite intimate terms with the family, especially with the ranchman's wife, who told me much of their life and many of her troubles. They were very serious, though her life was not without its compensations. It was pitiful to see the care-lines deepen in her sensitive face and an infinite perplexity cloud her eyes as she talked to me of her sorrows.

"My man is a good husband," she would say, "but he's not a good farmer. I don't know what's to become of us. He gets deeper and deeper into debt. Sometimes he works hard and manages well and I think that we are going to get on; and then in the middle of it the prospecting fever takes him, and he leaves everything and goes off into the mountains and spends every cent that he can raise, looking for silver.

"You see a fortune-teller told him once that he'd 'find his fortune in stone,' and ever since then he's been crazy to prospect and he's squandered everything off there in the mountains. The boys have to work too hard and they don't get the proper schooling, and I don't know what's to become of us.

"But there's my son John that keeps store in West Cliff"—and it was beautiful to see her face light up—"no woman ever had a better son than him. He's been like a father to the family. I don't know what we'd ever have done without him, for he's been the greatest help to us in all our troubles."

They urged me to stay longer on Friday morning, but the day was perfectly clear and patches of dry ground had begun to appear through the snow, and so I set out early, hoping to cover before night most of the distance to the entrance of Musa Pass, which leads from Green Mountain Valley over the Sangre De Cristo Range to the San Luis country.

I accomplished it comfortably, and early on the next morning made my way into the pass. The snow lay deep about the entrance, and it deepened as I climbed the range, but a party of prospectors had just come over the trail as I started in, and it was a simple matter to walk in the path which their burros had made through the snow. The prospectors did me another unconscious service, for when I met them two of the five men were suffering keenly from snow blindness, and, taking warning, I tore a strip from a coarse cotton handkerchief and bound it around my eyes, in a way that interfered very little with vision and yet acted as an adequate protection from the blinding glare of the sunlight on the snow.

That night I reached a Mormon's ranch well in the San Luis Valley. It was a matter of easy marching after that, for the snow was all gone in a day or two and I had only to walk by way of Alamosa and Monte Vista and Del Norte to the Wagon Wheel Gap region and so up to Créede.

I was much disappointed there in not finding work in the mines. Numbers of them were in operation, and there were large gangs of men employed, but there were plenty of experienced hands about, and nothing whatever in the mines for a raw tenderfoot to do. Still I had no difficulty, for at the very first asking I got work with a gang which was cutting a new road down Bachelor Mountain from the New York Chance Mine to Créede. And so, while not a member of a mining crew, I was a member of one which contained many miners, and I lived in the camp on Bachelor Mountain with scores of the men from the New York Chance and the Amethyst Mines, I fell in eventually with a group of truest Bohemians, a mine superintendent of the best type, and a magnificent chap who was an engineer and surveyor and whom I liked best of all, and a young Harvard-bred barrister who was on the high road to being the District Attorney, and a newspaper editor. I cannot now recall how I came to be one of their number, it was done so quickly and naturally; but I was suddenly aware that I had been accepted as such, and all that belonged to my new-found friends was mine, and the engineer and barrister and I were sleeping three in a bed.

My pen rebels against the necessity which spurs it to so swift a pace over details where it longs to linger. For those were hard but glorious days on the mountain; there were always new and strange men to be known among the crews, men whose emancipation from conventionality was complete, and whose personalities possessed a marvellous richness. The railway and statutory laws and honest women and the ten commandments were there, so that the camp "enjoyed the blessings of civilization," and was widely different from the camps of earlier days—much to the regret of the older men who knew the earlier days and many of the younger ones who would have liked to know them.

Already there were apparent the phases of human nature which seem by a curious contradiction to reveal themselves under the very protection of the vast improvement wrought by the reign of "law and order." But the freer, braver elements of human nature were present, too, and were not always beneath the surface of convention. How it stirred one's better blood to see those free, strong, natural men face one another in the common intercourse of life and meet the exigencies of their work! And under what spells have I sat looking in the eye some tawny-bearded giant of a prospector as he told of thirty years or more among the mountains and in the mining camps, of hardships endured and difficulties overcome and death and danger faced, and of the rare times when he "struck it rich," and then the lordly, vicious days when he "blew it in!" How much may have been concocted for the ready ear of a tenderfoot I did not know; I only knew that it reeked with the red, raw blood of life, and whether true or false it thrust roots deep into grim and stanch realities.

Hamilton will answer as the name of the engineer. It was in his office that the little coterie which I have mentioned would gather in the evenings. There were rough chairs of most comfortable shape, and there was always a roaring fire in the stove, for the nights were bitter cold, and a number of Hamilton's drawings in crayons and blue prints were tacked upon the walls, for besides being a skilful engineer he was a splendid draughtsman. His surveying instruments stood together in a corner, and the ample tables were covered with unfinished drawings and with the tools of his art.

Never was more diverting talk than that which ranged around the room where we sat in easy attitudes, with feet cocked up and chairs tilted, in the soft light of Hamilton's well-shaded lamps and in a deepening density of tobacco-smoke. And the talk was catholic in its range, for the editor was an authority on local and state and national politics, and, as a recent convert to "free silver," he could argue its cause with all the fervor of a novice. The barrister was a man of liberal education who had taught the classics and loved them, and who could, with real enthusiasm, lead the talk back from all things modern to

> "—those old days which poets say were golden."

And the mine superintendent, for all his shrewd and efficient practicality—for he was counted the best superintendent in the camp who, in the face of the declining price of silver and of other difficulties as great, had accomplished marvels with his mine—was profoundly interested in Biblical criticism; he could speak with the knowledge of a theologian on the authorship of the Pentateuch and the question of the inerrancy of Scripture and the authenticity and genuineness of the synoptic Gospels.

But I liked most of all to hear Hamilton as he would sit left ankle crossing his right knee, his right foot tip-toe on the floor balancing his tilted chair, and his guitar resting on his lap. Over the strings his great strong fingers would pass, striking soft harmonies, and his handsome, manly face would respond to the free play of emotion as in his rich voice and with unconscious vividness of camp speech he would talk of life and of its revelations to him throughout his varied history.

"I have had every experience but that of death," he said very quietly to me one day, when we had come to know each other well. As I watched him and saw his innate, thoughtful courtesy to women, and his strong, tender-hearted love of little children, and the frankness of his life, and his useful efficiency as a man, and his devotion to the truth, and his utter hatred of all cowardice and hypocrisy, I began to understand what royal possibilities there are in the men who prove best fitted to survive in the struggle of the frontier.

It was Hamilton who introduced me to Price. Price shall stand for the name of a prospector of a sort that is becoming rare at the West. The son of an officer in an Irish regiment, he was brought to America in his early boyhood and was reared on the Pacific coast. But the strictures of high civilization were too much for him, and long before he was out of his teens he was living the rough, fortuitous life of the mining camps and cattle tracts of the Southwest. Price is about forty now, and his range of occupation includes almost everything from a "burro puncher" to a member of the Legislature of Arizona. He seems to know, moreover, every trail in the two Territories and every soul along them, to the very Indians and "greasers" of the youngest generation, and he is just the sort who is looked upon out here as likely at any time "to strike it rich." So far, however, he has not struck it rich; very much the reverse. In the spring he punched his burros up from Phœnix to the Wagon-Wheel Gap region and prospected there all summer, but with no luck. When Hamilton introduced me to him, his burros were in hock and so were his blankets and his very cooking utensils and even his "gun," and he was longing for the means to redeem them that he might get out of the bitter cold of the mountains and down into the balmy

Indian summer of the Salt River Valley which was " God's country " to him.

No more ideal opportunity could have presented itself to me. It was late in November and the problem of going alone westward through the thinly settled country was a difficult one, and here, as by miracle, was its perfect solution. Moreover, as it proved, Price was a good fellow with a truly Irish sense of humor and a perfect adaptability born of long habit. And withal he was patient with my inexperience. He taught me the " diamond hitch," and how to make a fire from next to nothing, and tea out of water that was thick and green on the surface, how to cook " spuds " and fry bacon and make gravy and bake bread in a saucepan. He tried to make a burro puncher of me, but his patience gave out there, and he declared that I'd " never be worth my salt at that until I learned to swear." Then suiting the action to the word he would take a hand himself at this point, and fairly dancing in a frenzy of rage, would rip the air with uncouth, fluent curses, and the stubborn beasts would meekly take the ford or cease their aimless wandering and quicken their pace along the trail.

I had been working for two dollars and a half a day, the highest wages I had ever received; I soon got Price's animals and gun and camping outfit from the pawn-shop, and, on the morning of November 20th, we set out together to cross some five or six hundred miles of the frontier from Créede to central Arizona.

Ours was rather a typical prospecting outfit, I thought, for Price had an old, gaunt Indian pony which he rode, and our blankets and cooking utensils and provisions were made fast to packing saddles on the backs of two burros, one of which was called California and the other, Beecher. I was free to ride, when I chose, another burro, an uncommonly big one, which Price called Sacramento; but I generally preferred to walk, for the pace was slow, and, besides the three which I have named, there were two little burros, California's foals, and punching five, I soon found, was best accomplished on foot.

We camped that night far up among the head waters of the Rio Grande, and next day with much difficulty we began the toilsome journey of the Winnemonche Pass. It was hard work crossing the " divide." For many miles the trail lay through nearly three feet of snow. There was no driving the animals ahead; we were obliged to take turns in breaking a way ourselves, and then leading the animals through. Very soon we were drenched with sweat and with the snow that melted in the heat of our bodies, and all the while we were assailed by mountain winds which seemed to cut to the marrow in one's bones. But we always found a sheltered place in which to camp, where wood and water were plenty, and where after a good supper, we slept gloriously, huddled close together on our bed of canvas and gunny sacks, our blankets drawn up snugly over our heads.

With what a sense of keen relief did we begin the descent and pass swiftly into warmer regions, where the snow became thinner and gradually disappeared, and the sun warmed us with mild rays, and we came upon a settler's cabin here and there and had speech once more with our fellow-men!

Price had promised me Indian summer when once we should get so far on our way as Durango, and most amply was his promise fulfilled, for we passed through the town on a day when the sun shone from clear, cloudless blue, and the horizon was a *sierra* in sharp lines, and the twigs of distant trees stood clean-cut against the sky, and the withering, dusty earth reflected the glory of the sun, and the cool, buoyant air seemed almost vocal of a solemn ecstasy.

We camped that night in a wilderness region to the south of Durango, where we could see the smoke rising from encampments of Ute Indians, many of whom we met on the next day's march with droves of fine Indian ponies, which they were raising for the market. Our course was southward now across the San Juan River and through a section of the Navajo reservation in northern New Mexico.

The trail led us then through a dreary desert, where at times it was with great difficulty that we got fodder for our burros and wood enough to cook our meals and water enough to drink. After days of such marching and camping, there was immense delight in coming eventually to some cedar grove, where living water flowed and grass grew thick and we could build a huge campfire at night of well-seasoned cedar boughs.

The only sign of habitation that we saw for days together was an occasional trader's post, about which we usually found a considerable company of Navajos. Price could speak their language, and the young braves occasionally passed us on the march. Now and then one joined us in camp, shared a meal with us, and, after a long talk with Price, rolled himself in his blanket and slept beside our fire.

At last we came out upon the Santa Fé Railway, not far from Fort Wingate, and followed the line to Gallup, where, in a grove on the hill above the village, we went into camp for the

PRICE COULD SPEAK THEIR LANGUAGE, AND NOW AND THEN ONE JOINED US IN CAMP.

night. As a matter of fact we remained there nearly a week. Quite buried under a soft, wet snow we awoke on the first morning to find ourselves lying in melting slush, and the trail so obstructed that we could not get on. Then a bitter cold set in, and, in a region where I imagined the whole winter like a balmy spring, the thermometer sank to ten and twelve degrees below zero every night until we had nearly perished from the cold.

But the wave passed over us at last, and on December 10th we set out again, really none the worse for the touch of Arctic weather. Following the line of the Santa Fé Railway we crossed into Arizona, and, from a point due north of it, we cut down to the Petrified Forest and on down to a Mormon settlement called Woodruff on the Little Colorado River. It was two days' march thence to another Mormon settlement, Heber by name, among the Mogollon Mountains.

All this time Indian summer had utterly failed us, and had been succeeded by a season of lowering days wherein light snow-falls were frequent. Price hated snow as he hated nothing else in nature. It got upon his nerves and drove him to a species of madness. Frequently in the course of the journey from Gallup to Heber snow fell at night. Price was usually the first to stir in the morning. We had knowledge of a snow-fall in the added weight upon us when we woke, and it was something memorable to see Price throw back the blankets and the heavy tarpaulin which were drawn over our heads, and lift himself on his elbow in the gray dawn, and gaze about with fierce anger in his black eyes upon a pure, white, flawless world, with soft snow clinging to every twig in the still morning air, and delicate crystal prisms beginning to form in the warmth of the coming sun, and hear him growl, in deep disgust,

"This is hell!"

But Heber marked nearly the last stage of that phase of our journey. We spent Sunday, the 18th December, there with an old Mormon elder and his son; worked for them on Monday for our keep and then renewed the march on Tuesday morning. It was a long, hard day's pull up the northern side of the mountain to the "rimrock," in deep snow through a vast primeval forest of spruce and pine. Then a wonderful thing happened, for we made a sharp descent on the south side and, in the space of a little more than a day, reached a country where there was no snow, and the sun shone warm, and the cotton-wood was in full bloom along the water-courses, and the cedar and live oak stood green against the winter brown of the grass-grown hills.

We had Indian summer once more, and the softest, balmiest Indian summer has accompanied us thence all the way to Phœnix. We had hardships to endure, for the way was long and our provisions sometimes ran out. Once we lost our way for a time in a maze of "box cañons" and had nothing to eat for twenty-four hours, until, late on Christmas afternoon, we came out upon the ranch of a Virginian settler, whom Price knew well, and whose wife gave us a royal dinner of "hog and hominy," which I have heard lightly spoken of as a dish, but which I shall always remember as a most satisfying delicacy.

On we went then over the mountains to the Tonto Basin and through the Reno Pass to the Verde River. We were encamped there over Sunday on January 1st in the former reservation of the now deserted Fort McDowell, and early on Monday morning we started for Phœnix. By a forced march of thirty miles we entered the city at ten o'clock the same evening and had a huge supper in a Chinese restaurant; then, while our animals were eating their fill of fresh alfalfa in a corral attached to a livery-stable, we slept deeply near by on a heap of hay, glad to have reached the end of our six weeks' march across the narrowing frontier.

. . . .

San Francisco, Cal.,
February 1, 1893.

Not the most interesting nor profitable and certainly not the most adventurous of the many miles which I have walked in a slow progress across the continent has been this last stage of the journey up through California. And yet the remembrance of it will always have a place apart. Work was plenty, but I made no long stops, pressed on at the rate of thirty miles a day, impelled by the delight of walking in so glorious an air through the marvellous beauty of this Pacific slope.

Fresh from the dusty plains I was soon in the midst of the orange-groves heavily laden with ripe fruit all about Colton and Riverside, where the hills were terraced as in the Riviera and the sky was the deep, unfathomable blue of Italy. It was January, and the first, fresh green of the new year was upon the fields and had touched with infinite delicacy the rugged sides of the mountains whose summits flashed white in places from melting snow. The early mornings were frosty, but midday warmed to a gentle glow, and the cool of the evening came with the declining sun.

Many a time, on the plains or in the mountains, in the presence of some Mexican Pueblo of adobe huts in a strangely foreign setting of cedar-trees, with threads of water apparently flowing up hill along the irrigation ditches to scant fields reclaimed from the desert, it had been difficult to realize that one was still in America. Here again was strongest suggestion of the foreign, in the houses which survive from the Spanish period, and especially the old Mission churches, where dwells the dignity of age and one can pass completely into the very atmosphere of Spain.

It was on the third day's march, I think, from Los Angeles that I found myself nearing San Buenaventura. It was late in the afternoon, and the road ahead was an easy upward slope for several miles. Just at sunset I reached the summit. The town of San Buenaventura lay below me, with its long main street curving through rows of houses of widely various kind, and the Mission church standing on an elevation to the left, with its stucco walls bathed in sunset light, making a strange contrast with the modern town. And beyond, with the sun's red disc a half circle on the horizon line, lay the peaceful sea, with a tongue of living flame across it turning to black coals the islands in its wake. In a moment the sun was gone, the shadow of the evening was upon the ocean, and over the town had fallen the transfiguration light which rests after sunset in spring-time upon Naples.

Three thousand miles away, and a year and a half in point of time for me, was Long Island Sound. I recalled the last glimpse of it as I looked back from Greenfield Hill in the early morning of my start, and saw it radiant in the sunshine of a midsummer day. And here again, after many months and many leagues of land journey, was the sea. **Θάλαττα**! **Θάλαττα**! I called aloud, for there was no one near enough to hear.

It was a rare moment, worth living for, that first unexpected glimpse of the Pacific. But strangely enough the feeling which it bred was no harbinger of an eager willingness to end my long experiment. Many a time when work was hard, and far more ardently when there was no work and the physical conditions of life seemed well-nigh unendurable, had I looked with longing to a return to normal living. And yet, as I neared my journey's end I found possessing me a strange indifference to the idea of return. I do not attempt to analyze the feeling, I simply note it as a fact; but in some degree I recognize in it a vague unwillingness to have done with a phase of experience which for me has opened avenues of useful knowledge. Among them all there rises clearest at this moment the way of added knowledge of my country. I may have travelled it to little purpose, but I am conscious at least of a new-born sense of things which comes of actual contact with the soil and with the primal struggle for existence among men. One stands awestruck before the vastness of our great domain and its quick redemption from the wilderness. But most of all it is contact with the people which breeds in one the strongest patriotic feeling. Local conditions and the presence of large numbers of yet unassimilated foreign elements and rapid changes in economic relations and native weaknesses and vagaries are responsible for awful sores upon the body politic, while the power of aggregated wealth grows apace, and fierce antagonisms and sectional differences arise. Yet beneath the troubled surface of events one comes to know of the great body of a nation whose unity has been purchased and made sure by such a cost of blood and treasure as was never poured out upon the altar of a nation's life before, and one sees a people intelligent, resourceful, and hugely vital, having much to learn and surely learning much, assimilating foreign elements with miraculous swiftness and growing stronger thereby, living laborious days wherein the rewards are to thrift and energy and enterprising skill, knowing no defeat and unacquainted with the sense of fear, and awakening year by year to a fuller consciousness of national life and of the glorious mission of high destiny. And with increasing knowledge the love of country grows until all thought of worth in her is merged and lost in reverence, and love of her becomes a summons to live worthy of the name and calling of an American.

THE END.

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